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THE MASTER'S COMFORT AND HOPE

SERMONS ON JOHN XIII. 31–XIV. 31

BY

ALFRED E. GARVIE

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"MY AGGIE"

ABSENT FROM THE BODY

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WHICH FOR HER IS FAR BETTER

WHILE FOR ME REMAIN

WALKING BY FAITH

AND

ENDURING IN HOPE

TILL LOVE'S REUNION

IN HEAVEN

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PREFACE.

WHEN pastor of a church it was my practice at the Sunday morning services to preach courses of sermons, as I believe with all my heart in the regular exposition of the Scriptures. From October 1898 to June 1899 I preached twenty sermons on Jesus' Farewell Talk with His Disciples (John xiii. 31–xiv. 31). The sermons were not written out, but delivered from full outlines. In October 1913 I came back to this course of sermons, and preached them all in different churches throughout England till the end of June 1914, without following the original order, but as seemed most suitable in each case. I was then under a severe strain of anxiety about the health of my wife, and found great comfort and hope for myself in renewing my study of the words of the Master and in seeking to minister to the needs of others for succour and consolation. After the "call home" of my wife I for a time felt myself unable to apply myself to my usual studies, and found a task more fitted to a mind sore distressed in writing out these

sermons in full, in the hope that what I had learned in suffering might be of some value to fellow-sufferers. The work was completed on Christmas Day, 1914, but owing to the war publication has been delayed. The need for sharing with others the comfort and hope the Master's words have brought to me seems greater to-day than ever. This personal explanation is offered not as a cowardly defence against any deserved criticism, but to place the reader in the sympathetic attitude in which alone sermons on such subjects can be properly understood.

The title of the series in which this volume appears must be my excuse, if excuse be necessary, for touching on questions of scholarship, which in ordinary preaching I should leave unmentioned in the pulpit, although never disregarded in the study. As I have never been able to read a sermon in the pulpit, what I have written is probably more condensed than what I should preach, although in writing I have tried to keep an audience before me, and to write not an essay but a sermon. Whether I have succeeded or not the reader must decide, but I should ask him to judge as a hearer rather than as a reader.

One other explanation may be pardoned. As one who has in recent years been reading and thinking much on the art of preaching, I have, on the one hand, been careful about the orderly arrangement of the matter of the sermons, which I have tried to indicate in the Table of Contents; but, on the other, I have avoided forcing the contents of all the sermons

into one mould, such as has been sometimes advocated by theorists on the subject, as I believe that both text and topic should determine the treatment, and that the preacher must not allow the freedom of his spirit to be fettered by any theory of sermon-construction.

As, among the forms of service to which God has called me, I prize preaching most highly, I send forth my first volume of sermons with a deeper personal interest than any of the books with which I have hitherto endeavoured to render some help to Christian theology.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

New College, London,
Christmas, 1916.

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THE MASTER'S COMFORT AND HOPE.

I.

THE FATHER AND THE SON GLORIFIED.

"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him."—JOHN xiii. 31, 32.

LAST words are precious. What then can compare in value with the farewell talk of Jesus to His disciples? This is recorded for us in John xiii. 31–xiv. 31. Not only does xiv. 31 indicate that at this point Jesus and His disciples rose from the table; but the conversation as here given bears all the marks of the last words at the Last Supper. It is highly probable that the contents of chaps. xv. and xvi. were not spoken, as is often assumed, on the way to Gethsemane, but earlier than the Supper, on the same or the preceding day. Against Dr. Moffatt's arrangement in his *New Translation of the New Testament*, in which he places xv. and xvi. between the two parts of xiv. 31, there is the objection that the opening words

in John xiv. 31, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him," find their most appropriate context in xiv. 30. The withdrawal of the traitor relieved Jesus of a heavy burden; His depression was followed by an exaltation of spirit. With the traitor already on the way to the Jewish rulers, He felt Himself nearer the sacrifice in which He would be glorified, and the Father in Him.

It is much to be regretted that the division of chapters, and the greater familiarity of readers of the Bible with the fourteenth than the thirteenth chapter, throws into prominence the mood of the disciples as indicated in xiv. 1, rather than the mood of Jesus as expressed in xiii. 31. He was comforting them in their trouble not as one who shared their depression even although He sympathised with their grief, but as one who was so exalted in spirit by the prospect before Him that He could offer them the comfort they needed. While they were dwelling in gloom, He was abiding in glory, not only *the Glory expected at the Resurrection*, but even *the Glory experienced in the Sacrifice*.

I.

1. What Jesus meant by *the glory now experienced* and also *the glory hereafter expected* by Him, appears clearly in two other passages. When the request of the Greeks to see Him was brought to Him by Andrew and Philip, He straightway answered: "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified"

(xii. 23). He saw Himself glorified in His sacrifice for men, the falling into the earth and the dying of the grain of wheat that it might bear much fruit (ver. 24), and in His sovereignty over men, the lifting up by which He would draw all men unto Himself (ver. 32). In the high-priestly prayer He declared that He had glorified God in having accomplished the work which God had given Him to do, and prayed that He might be glorified with the glory which He had before the world was (xvii. 4, 5). With these representations of the Fourth Gospel it is worth comparing the statement of Paul in Phil. ii. 9–11. John xii. 23 does represent the death as a self-humbling of the Son of Man which is also His glorifying. John xvii. 5 does suggest that at the Incarnation an eternal divine glory was laid aside, which would be resumed at the Resurrection. Paul still more strongly emphasises the self-humbling of the Incarnation; it is not less than a *kenosis*, a self-emptying of the very form of God; but he represents the exaltation at the Resurrection as not merely a return to the glory of the state before the Incarnation, but as something more and greater. The *name above every name*, to which every knee should bow, the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God as Father, is more even than *the form of God*, it is more even than *the equality with God* which he conceives as a possible object of ambition to the Son of God, as it is the token of the Father's approval of the Son's Sacrifice. This thought of the exaltation

after the humiliation as more and greater than the restoration of the glory of the pre-existent state, may appear to be in contradiction to John xvii. 5; but it is in entire agreement with the thought of John xii. 24 and 32, for the Son of Man dying to bring forth fruit, lifted up to draw all men to Himself, is more and greater than the Word which had not yet become flesh. With verbal differences, there is substantial agreement between the Fourth Gospel and Paul's representation of the humiliation and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. While fully recognising that we are moving in a region where angels would scarcely dare to tread, we may yet with all reverence endeavour to define as accurately as we can the truth that these passages suggest to us. It is surely this, that the eternal is not indifferent to, or unaffected by, the temporal; that human history has meaning and worth for the divine reality; that the Incarnation, the Sacrifice, and the Resurrection of the Son of God do not concern Him as Man alone, but that in Him manhood has been brought into so intimate and indissoluble a unity with God, that for the nature of the Godhead itself the purpose fulfilled in Him has significance and value. The *kenosis* is followed by a *plerosis* not for Christ apart from God, but the *kenosis* no less than the *plerosis* is for God Himself. God emptied Himself in and with Christ, and God is fulfilled in the fulfilment of Christ. When the Son is glorified, God is glorified in Him. This is a truth of which theology has not taken

sufficient account, because in a great deal of our thinking about God there still survive pagan ideas of the immutability and impassibility of God, which make God a vague abstraction above and beyond this world, and make history a vain show as regards the life of God Himself. In this utterance of Jesus, as in all the expressions of His self-consciousness, these pagan ideas are contradicted. It is a divine purpose which is being fulfilled, and there is a divine participation in the fulfilment. Religion, and not speculation only, has an interest in emphasising this truth, for the human heart needs and can find rest only in a God who cares, and strives, and suffers with and for man. Man's mind might seem too rashly bold in so conceiving God, were there not the warrant for such a conception in the self-witness of Jesus as it lies before us in the Fourth Gospel, and in the interpretation of the work of Christ of the Christian Apostle. With such an infinite and eternal background, let us approach more closely this utterance of Jesus in the mood of exaltation.

II.

1. Jesus regarded His Sacrifice not merely as a condition of future glory, but as by its very nature a present glory. As Son of Man He was being already glorified in His Cross, because it was not the annulment, but the fulfilment of His vocation. A man will conceive honour, fame, success as he conceives the meaning, worth, and aim of life. If wealth, power, or

praise is the object which he sets before himself, he will feel himself humiliated if he misses any of these prizes. If, however, the realisation of one of the ideals which are both the inspiration and the despair of the soul of man is his purpose, any circumstance, however painful or trying, which does not hinder, but helps his progress towards this goal, will be welcome to him; in it he will find satisfaction; of it he will make his boast; by it He will be glorified. The exaltation Jesus felt and uttered was His sense that His work was being done, His trust being kept, His goal being reached; even the treachery of a Judas as a means to this end was an occasion of His being glorified. The only reputation among, or influence over, men which He sought was the sovereignty of His sacrifice over their souls, the satisfaction that His sorrow and suffering could bring to them. The only praise or honour He desired from men was their recognition that He had done what the Father had given Him to do, because that recognition would also be their appropriation of the blessings God gave mankind in Him.

2. Jesus accordingly could regard Himself as glorified in His Cross only if in it He saw the fulfilment of His vocation. It has commonly been assumed that Jesus entered on His ministry, intending and expecting by His words and works to accomplish the task, and that only after failure and disappointment did He think of His sacrifice as the only means of fulfilling the calling now left to Him. While we need not suppose that He had a detailed programme in His

mind from the first, yet He had surely a certain foresight based on a clear insight into God's method of fulfilling His will. There are indications that He recognised His vocation in the description of the Suffering Servant of God in Isa. liii.; and that accordingly from the first He anticipated and dedicated Himself to His sacrifice. It came to Him not as a failure or a disappointment, but as a fulfilment of the vocation which He had chosen.

3. If Jesus so regarded His sacrifice, we must reverse the world's common estimate of sorrow and suffering. The highest calling can be fulfilled only at the greatest cost: and so in success and prosperity a man may fail to fulfil his manhood, while in struggle and grief he may become all that God means that he should be. Sacrifice must not be endured as merely an inevitable method of attaining some desirable object beyond it, but it should be welcomed, as it was by Jesus, as itself a good, the realisation of man's ideal, and the fulfilment of God's purpose.

III.

1. Jesus in this saying carries us a step farther; not only is He Himself glorified in His sacrifice, but God too is glorified in Him, for His fulfilment of His vocation is also the realisation of God's purpose for mankind. In all human truth, love, and goodness God is glorified, for in all these His nature is revealed and His purpose is realised. God's glory is

God's manifested perfection; and wherever man loves, thinks, acts in fellowship with God and likeness to God, gleams of that glory break through the darkness of the world. But Jesus was conscious of a more immediate and intimate relation to God than any man's, a more distinctive and decisive vocation from and for God than any man's; and so He could regard His sacrifice as the fullest and clearest manifestation of the perfection of God in human history. In it God's truth was revealed, and God's grace realised as in no other event on earth. His was a twofold work for God, to reveal God and to redeem man. He had not only taught God's Fatherhood in word, but He had so lived as the Son of God as to make that Fatherhood a reality for man as words alone could never have made it. By His pity for and pardon of sinners, He had related that divine Fatherhood to the reality in human experience, which made the relation of God as love to mankind most difficult to conceive, and yet most necessary to believe; and He had made it possible for men to exercise the faith in God which claimed the certainty of God's forgiveness. He was conscious, however, that His calling was not fulfilled in His life and work. He had a baptism to be baptized with, and how was He straitened till it was accomplished (Luke xii. 50). His ministry had as its final issue the giving of His life as a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28). God's Fatherhood was not fully revealed until it was shown to be love to the utter-

most of sacrifice. Man's forgiveness was not fully assured until it was conveyed to men in an atonement, which judged the sin forgiven. Jesus Himself regarded His vocation as fulfilled, and so God's glory realised through Him only in His sacrifice.

2. The Cross of Christ is the final word about God for Man. While God's glory fills the earth and the heavens, neither the world around nor the history of mankind expresses adequately what God is and what God wills. Clouds and darkness are often round about God when we try to discover His goodness in nature. The mystery of evil casts its dark and drear shadow over the world. Even if in man's experience there are proofs that righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne, yet the problem of Providence remains unsolved. "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." The book of His purpose is sealed with seven seals, and no man can open it. It is only the Lamb in the midst of the throne who can open that book and loose the seals thereof (Rev. v.). For He alone has redeemed men from sin and death to be the children of God. Here and here alone is God's glory undimmed.

IV.

1. Although Jesus in His exaltation of mood confesses *a glory already experienced*, He joins to it at once a *glory straightway expected*. In all the announcements of His Passion there was included a

promise of His speedy Resurrection. He was glorified in His death, and God was glorified in Him, not because death ended His career, but because in it He fulfilled His vocation on earth, and through it passed to the more abiding, world-wide and higher ministry of heaven. The contrast between the earthly and the heavenly life of the Saviour and Lord is suggested to us by several statements of Scripture. *First of all*, the temporal and local limitations of the earthly life were removed in His heavenly life. He is with His people everywhere and always (Matt. xxviii. 20). Wherever faith in Him is exercised, His presence is realised. *Secondly*, His authority and His power are increased, for now all authority is given Him in heaven and on earth (ver. 18), and by His indwelling and inworking power His followers can do even greater works than He did (John xiv. 12). He is gaining an absolute sovereignty over the thought and life of mankind. *Thirdly*, as His own repeated references to His return to the Father show, His own relation to God as Father entered on a new and higher stage through His death and Resurrection, to which He looked forward, and for which He longed as a good to be gained (ver. 28). *Fourthly*, as Christian experience, notably that of the Apostle Paul, testifies, His relation to man became more immediate and intimate, more adequate to man's need, and so surely also more satisfying to His grace. When Paul could say that to him to live was Christ (Phil. i. 21), and that

he no longer lived, but Christ lived in him (Gal. ii. 20), he was not only confessing his own good; but surely he was also testifying to Christ's gain as Saviour and Lord. *Fifthly*, there is a growing extension of His supremacy as Saviour and Lord. As lifted up to His throne by His Cross, He is drawing all men unto Himself (John xii. 32). If we rejoice in the spread of the gospel, surely to Christ Himself the extension of His kingdom must be a crown of rejoicing. *Lastly*, we do not yet witness the submission of all mankind to His truth and grace; but human history offers pledges of the fulfilment of the divine promise of a universal dominion, and Jesus as He faced death, looked through death to the glory of His finally fulfilled Saviourhood and Lordship.

2. While we thus dwell on the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly life, we must not lose sight of the close connection of the glory experienced and the glory expected. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, yea, and for ever (Heb. xiii. 8). It is the same truth and grace which is glorified in sacrifice and in sovereignty, in the Cross of shame or in the Crown of dominion. In His own consciousness Jesus did not distinguish and oppose, as Christian theology has done, the state of exaltation and the state of humiliation; but felt Himself glorified no less in the one than in the other. For Christian aspiration there must be no separation or opposition of sacrifice and sovereignty. The Christian fulfils his vocation in the trials, sorrows, and struggles of his

earthly life no less than he may hope he will in the rest, deliverance, and blessedness of the heavenly life. And without the experience of the one there can be no expectation of the other. The Captain of Salvation was Himself made perfect through suffering (Heb. ii. 10); had He not endured the Cross, despising the shame, there had been no joy set before Him (xii. 2). He, too, found His life by losing it. It would seem as if for God Himself *kenosis* is the condition of *plerosis*, a self-emptying of a self-fulfilment. For the confession of His own exaltation by the Son of Man is a temporal echo of the eternal melody of the perfect, blessed, and glorious life of God Himself, for in the Son we see and know, have and hold the Father.

II.

THE OUTWARD AND THE INWARD SEPARATION.

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards. Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee. Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice."—JOHN xiii. 33, 36–38.

WHILE Jesus was Himself in the mood of exaltation, expressed in vers. 31 and 32, He was not so selfishly absorbed in the glory experienced or expected as to be insensible and unresponsive to the mood of His disciples. He did recognise that His glory meant separation from them as regards His visible presence, His earthly companionship. So considerately does He express the warning of His near departure that Peter does not at once realise what the words may mean; and thus Jesus has continued His discourse in giving the New Commandment (vers. 34 and 35) before Peter interrupts with the question in ver. 36 which con-

nects itself immediately with the warning of ver. 33. That close connection we may now restore in seeking to present the characteristics of the conversation of Jesus with Peter. We are overhearing familiar table-talk, the personal intercourse of Jesus with one of His disciples; and our exposition must adapt itself to the matter with which we are dealing.

I.

1. We may notice first of all *the considerate announcement of Jesus* of the separation from the disciples. He addresses them as *little children*, a term of endearment common in the First Epistle of John; and we may assume that the disciple echoed the words of the Master rather than put his own mode of addressing his disciples on the Master's lips. It was with deep affection and tender solicitude that Jesus thought of leaving His disciples, as a fond parent might bid farewell to his immature and dependent children. After such a form of address it is a little surprising that Jesus should have announced His departure in terms similar to those which He had used to His enemies (vii. 33 and viii. 21). The use of the term *Jews* for the hostile party is so distinctive of the evangelist that we are forced to suppose that Jesus Himself did not use the word, but in some other terms referred to His opponents. The same words may have a different meaning when they are spoken with a different

motive. If Jesus spoke of His death or departure to His enemies, it was because their enmity forbade plain speech. When He spoke to the disciples in the same way, it was out of compassion for them and considerateness towards them. He had tried to get them to face frankly the necessity of His death, and to understand in some measure the reason why it was so necessary; but they would not take His warnings seriously. Now He strives to arouse their anxiety, to compel their serious thought, to stimulate their inquiry, to lead them step by step to recognise the inevitableness of the separation.

2. In adopting this course Jesus showed both His wisdom and His kindness. Sometimes it is far better to let a mind work its own way to a conclusion than to force it at once to that conclusion. A conviction so reached from within is held more firmly than one which has been given from without. Such a word as *death* may so bewilder and daze that the meaning of the announcement is not as fully and clearly seen as when by the use of another word the mind is allowed time for its own activity. In repeating the warning He had given to His foes now to His friends, might not Jesus also desire to convey to their minds the suggestion that while His departure meant separation from His friends, it also would assure Him of security from His foes? If He would be withdrawn from the affectionate ministry of the one, He would also be protected from the cruel persecution of the other.

3. We may learn from and follow Jesus in the little as in the great. There are men who, claiming to be Christian, make a boast of their bluntness, regardless of the pain they cause. To use the phrase such men are wont to employ to justify themselves, they call a spade a spade. To be considerate in speech, however, is not to be dishonest and insincere. While truth is always to be spoken, it must ever be spoken in love, and love may often require that truth be suggested rather than stated, that the mind be put on its track rather than brought at once to its haunt. There must always be adaptation to the mind which is to receive the truth as well as liberation of the mind which communicates it.

II.

1. This considerate announcement by Jesus failed to stimulate the intelligence of the disciples. While Peter, who was always too ready for speech, did pause a moment before breaking in with his *curious question*, so that Jesus had time to give the new commandment, yet he did not hesitate about interrupting the Master's discourse with his confession of ignorance. It must surprise us that after the repeated announcements of His approaching passion, in view of all the circumstances showing the hostility of the Jewish rulers, Peter and the others found a difficulty in understanding so simple an allusion

as Jesus had just made. It is true that Jesus had on previous occasions withdrawn Himself and His followers from positions of peril, and it may be that, if Peter did recognise the peril, he thought that Jesus was now intimating some such purpose of escape. It is more likely, however, that he and the other disciples were so possessed by their own views and hopes, sharing as they did the popular expectations of the Messiah, that they did not even consider Jesus' warnings and were quite unable to apprehend the actual situation.

2. How painful to Jesus must have been this attitude of His disciples! When He wanted and needed their intelligence and sympathy most, they were most estranged from Him in thought and feeling. Personal loyalty of a sort there was; but not the comprehension of His plans and the submission to His purpose which He must have desired. We must not, however, too hastily charge them with an incurable stupidity on the one hand, or a deliberate cruelty on the other. If they had been capable of the one or the other, Jesus would not have chosen them to carry on His work, and they certainly would not after His death have maintained His cause as they did. Theirs is an instance of the tyrannous influence over mind and life of a preconception, especially when that is reinforced by personal preferences. All Jesus' teaching and training had so far failed to bring them over entirely to His point of view as regards His work; and

accordingly their own views and plans always come in between Him and them.

3. This tragedy of misunderstanding has often been repeated in the history of the Christian Church. It has been constantly the painful lot of the Master to be misunderstood by His followers. How far short has Christian theology fallen from apprehending the mind of Christ! How has Christian piety failed to respond to the heart of Christ! And just as ignorance did not restrain Peter's utterance, so, less modest than he, the Church has not merely asked curious questions, but it has made definite declarations in the name of Christ which had no claim to His authority because altogether lacking in His Spirit. As Peter by his question, so has it often interrupted His revelation of Himself to the world.

III.

1. In spite of the dulness of understanding betrayed in Peter's question, Jesus does not at once abandon His figurative language. He does not at once turn to plain prose. He keeps up the likeness of a journey, and, as Peter by his question had concentrated attention on himself, Jesus now directs His speech to Peter alone. While there is a *sad warning* of an inevitable separation, it is bound up with a *comforting promise* of an ultimate reunion. At present Jesus clearly holds Peter incapable of fidelity unto death; in the future He as surely expects such fidelity. Jesus knew Peter

better than Peter knew himself. Just as His insight had discovered to Him Judas as traitor, so is Peter the confessor laid bare as the denier. Close as had been the companionship, warm as had been the affection, hot as was the enthusiasm of Peter, yet he was not morally or spiritually fit for martyrdom. Was this unfitness of Peter and his companions a disappointment to Jesus in the double sense that it grieved Him to be compelled to think less worthily of any of His followers than He would have desired in His love to think of them, and that it appeared to Him a loss to the kingdom of God that it could not command their loyalty unto death? As He regarded His own life as a ransom for many, did He expect any advantage to His cause from the companionship of His followers in His death, had they been willing to endure such a test of their fidelity? Or did He consider His sacrifice as by its nature so solitary that He had no desire that it should be shared? We cannot definitely answer these questions, but we may be sure of this, that whether the death of any of the disciples along with the Master appeared necessary or not, yet the unfitness of them all for martyrdom was a sorrow to Him who fully surrendered His own life in obedience to the Father's will.

2. Jesus, however, was always able to look beyond the passing moment. Had He not had a foresight as keen as His insight, His sorrow had been uncomforted. But even for Peter He could and did anticipate the glory of martyrdom. After He had restored the

penitent disciple, He more plainly indicated by what manner of death he should glorify God (xxi. 15–19). It is not at all incredible that He uttered this prophecy of Peter's end. While He saw Peter's present weakness, He also foresaw Peter's future renewal in strength. The fidelity which He saw would now falter He foresaw would at last prevail. Even although Peter was no more able to lay hold on the comfort than to take to heart the warning in the words of Jesus, yet the utterance is unspeakably precious for Christian faith in all times; for it assures the Christian believer of an unerring judgment not less kind than it is just—a judgment which, recognising present unworthiness, expects future worthiness; and a judgment, because it is of grace, which can make actual the promise that it foresees in spite of the defect which it now sees.

IV.

At last Peter realises what Jesus means. It is towards death that the path of the Master is leading; but so ignorant is he of himself, that he at once utters the *confident boast*, "I will lay down my life for thee." A similar utterance is recorded in Matt. xxvi. 35, Mark xiv. 31, and Luke xxii. 33. Surely this confident boast shows how deceptive is the human heart, how necessary is the counsel, "Man, know thyself." Peter mistakes his excited emotions for a constant devotion, and he accepts his own self-conceit and self-confidence as an evidence of his moral and spiritual

capacity. Had he not been warned by Jesus, the suddenness of the temptation might have suggested an excuse, if not offered a reason, for his failure; but it must be observed that he maintained his own estimate of himself in spite of Jesus' warning. His ignorance of himself was an invincible ignorance. Yet before we condemn him, let us examine ourselves whether we do not share his fault and guilt. Failure in Christian living is in many cases due to inability for self-examination and self-estimate. While there is a morbid introspection, which not only brings misery, but even causes weakness, yet on the other hand there is a thoughtless assurance of an adequate faith claiming a sufficiency of grace, which results in disastrous defeat in any moral struggle of unusual and unexpected severity. The man who has maintained his moral respectability under slight temptation fails in moral integrity when the severe trial comes upon him.

V.

When Peter has faced the situation, and has used plain speech in his confident boast, Jesus is not less direct and simple in His *compassionate warning*. It is not in mockery, but in pity, that He contrasts what Peter declares himself ready to do with what he will actually do. Martyrdom the expectation, denial the reality. The form in which the warning is given in Luke's Gospel gives us a glimpse into the heart of Christ. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have

you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren" (xxii. 31, 32). Jesus recognised the necessity of a testing of His disciple; He dreaded the possibility of an entire apostasy through failure of faith; He expected the reality of a recovery, and a greater capacity for service as the result. He had averted the grievous possibility, and had secured the comforting reality by His intercession. The personal solicitude which is thus revealed is no less for us than for Peter. In the individual Christian experience, to-day as at all times, there come in manifold forms warnings of peril which, although the voice of Jesus is not heard, come no less from Him, and are no less a proof of a personal solicitude which now as ever is also expressed in a prevailing intercession. The warning may often be less definite in its terms, but it is not less real; and, if conscience is sensitive, it will be sufficient. God grant that we give better heed to it than did Peter!

VI.

1. As Jesus taught His disciples not in formal discourse, but in individual conversation, it is desirable and legitimate for the Christian preacher sometimes to depart from the usual form of the sermon, and to make at least the attempt to bring out more fully the meaning of such conversation by a running commentary, as has now been done. And yet the demand for unity in a

sermon is justified, and so in closing a thought may be suggested, around which all that has been said may be grouped. It is this, that inward separation is a greater evil, more to be dreaded, than outward. The disciples were so afraid of the outward separation which the death of Jesus would bring that it was needful for Him to make as considerate an announcement as He could. He did not thrust the fact upon them, but broke it gently to them. And yet there was a greater evil of which they were quite unconscious, and of which, in His compassionate warning to Peter, He had to make them aware. They by holding their own opinions and following their own ways had been allowing an inward separation, which made them less ready and fit to face the outward. For Judas that inward separation had gone so far that he was ready to betray. For Peter it had gone so far also that, regardless of Jesus' warnings, ignorant of his own weakness, and confident of his own strength, he was about to deny. For the others, it had gone so far that they all forsook Him, and fled (Matt. xxvi. 56). His death was a disaster to them, the greater because they had refused to remain united with Him in His purpose and expectation regarding His saving sacrifice.

2. In present-day experience there is a real counterpart of this outward and inward separation. The fellowship of the Church corresponds to the companionship of Jesus with His disciples. Outward separation from the Church seems to many the greatest of all possible evils; and it is a great evil, not so much

in itself, but because it is generally the sign of the greater evil, separation from Christ Himself. There may be this inward separation when there is not the outward, and without the outward the inward is even more perilous, because it is not recognised and confessed. Again and again a Christian community is startled by the exposure of one of its prominent members, who has been, to use the common phrase, living a double life. While there is a conscious and deliberate hypocrisy, a *play-acting* of religion for worldly ends, yet more often there has been no sense of the unreality of the Christian profession, no feeling of the growing separation from Christ as the Saviour and the Lord. Many a man who falls before a sudden and strong temptation, and who is harshly adjudged a hypocrite, is no more conscious of his position and peril than was Peter, with whom Jesus dealt so faithfully and yet so compassionately. While we each one of us may learn from Peter our own need of taking heed to our ways lest we, too, fall as he did, we may also learn from Jesus to be pitiful and kind in our judgment and treatment of others, for He did not "break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax."

III.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT.

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—JOHN xiii. 34, 35.

1. THE transition from Jesus' warning of His approaching departure to His giving of the New Commandment may appear abrupt; but the connection of thought can be recovered. The memory and the influence of the ministry of Jesus after His departure could be best continued if the company of disciples kept closely together, and cherished their common life in their devotion to Him. Not only would their communion with one another in love compensate in some measure for the loss of His visible presence in their midst, sustaining their faith in Him, and their hope of His return; but it would be the condition of their realising His invisible presence among them. The bond of their personal devotion to Him in their daily intercourse with Him must be replaced by the experience of the mutual support which their common memory and expectation

could give. As Peter's interruption and Jesus' response in vers. 36 to 38 break in on the continuity of Jesus' thought, we may directly connect the command with the call to faith and hope in xiv. 1, 2. Only as a united company, each member of which would seek to help all the others, could the disciples be carried through the trial of the death of Christ without the loss of their confidence and expectancy.

2. Simple as these verses seem they are capable of several explanations, and we must glance at some of the meanings the words may bear. While our English translation leaves no doubt about the content of the commandment, "that ye love one another," the Greek words may mean "in order that ye love one another," mutual love being thus the purpose and not the content of the commandment. In that case what is the content? It has been conjectured that it was the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which had just been instituted. While this is a very attractive suggestion, yet it is hazardous, as John, who omits the record of the institution, would not be likely to introduce so obscure a reference to it. And in Greek usage the purpose of a commandment and its content are practically equivalent; one orders what is to be done in order that it may be done. A similar ambiguity attaches to the second half of the verse. The clause "even as I have loved you" may express the measure of the mutual love, but also the reason for it. In the first case the last clause simply repeats the commandment given; in the second case the

meaning is, "I give you this commandment to love, because the purpose of all the love I have shown you has been to bind you together in love for one another." The end of His love to the disciples will be fulfilled only as they love one another. This is the more probable sense. Thus interpreting the verse, we may learn from it the *nature* of the new commandment, the *purpose* of it, and also the *reason* for it.

I.

What was there so peculiar in the nature of the commandment that Jesus described it as *new*? It was not His first mention of love as a Christian duty. Having illustrated the universal impartial beneficence of God in sending sunshine and shower on just and unjust alike, He had bidden the disciples to be perfect in this respect as the Heavenly Father (Matt. v. 43–48). He had in answer to the question regarding the first or greatest commandment conjoined the precepts of absolute love to God and equal love to self and neighbour (Matt. xxii. 37–40). He had by the parable of the Good Samaritan removed all barriers to neighbourliness in national or religious prejudice (Luke x. 30–37). He had depicted the rich man as in torment because he had left the beggar at his gate unheeded and untended (xvi. 19–31). He had represented the standard of the judgment of the nations as philanthropy (Matt. xxv. 31–46). The demand of love was no novelty in the

teaching of Jesus. But the love here enjoined was something other and more than any He had hitherto taught. As the context shows, it is the circle of the disciples to which the Master is now confining His regard, and it is about their mutual relation that He is now concerned. Their love as brethren (*φιλαδελφία*) is to be, not a contradiction or exclusion, but a concentration and intensification of their love as men for their fellow-men (*φιλανθρωπία*). The diffused light and heat of the love to all which has been commanded, is to find a focus of brighter gleam and warmer glow in their constant and intimate communion one with another.

2. When Jesus called His disciples to be with Him as His daily companions, He took the first step towards the formation of the Christian society; but the common bond was attachment and devotion to Himself. The withdrawal of His visible presence, and all that it meant for the company of His followers, necessitated the provision of another motive and means of unity, in order that the society not only might be preserved as it had hitherto been, but might even make progress in becoming more completely one. On the one hand, the memory of what Jesus had been, taught, and wrought must be kept vivid, and the expectation of His return in power and glory intense; on the other hand, the hostility of the world around must be dared, and its persecution must be endured in bearing witness to the Risen and the Returning Lord. For so great a trust and

so hard a task isolated individuals would have been altogether insufficient; only a society held closely and firmly together could avail for such a burden and such a battle. Within the company of disciples there were disquietening and even distressing signs of ambition, rivalry, and discord. The dispute as to who should be greatest in the Kingdom (Matt. xviii. 1–6), the request of the sons of Zebedee for the highest places (xx. 21), the indignation of the other disciples at the request, the unwillingness of any of the disciples to perform the menial service of washing the feet (John xiii. 1–17), all these were symptoms of a disease in the body of the disciples which would unfit it for its calling and work, and could be cured only by the love enjoined in the new commandment.

3. While the Christian Church even in the Apostolic Age fell far short of perfect obedience to the perfect teaching and example of Jesus, yet this commandment was recognised and obeyed. Not only do we find it echoed again and again in the First Epistle of John (iii. 10–14, iv. 11), and brotherly love represented as the distinctive feature of the Christian community in contrast with the hostile world; but a very practical application was given to it in what has been described as the communism of the Jerusalem fellowship (Acts iv. 32). Paul wrote the hymn of love in 1 Cor. xiii., which, as the connection with the preceding chapter shows, referred to the fellowship of believers within the Christian Church. In his comparison of the

Christian Society to a living body, he is not describing an ideal altogether unrelated to actuality, for the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit were realised in a *Koinonia*, a community of life, a participation in common gifts, a mutual service. It was in the communion of the Holy Spirit that the new commandment was fulfilled in the Apostolic Church. As the Church grew in numbers the closeness of the fellowship could not be maintained; and yet as late as the end of the second century (in A.D. 190) Tertullian testifies to the fact that the heathen world bore its unwilling witness, "See how these Christians love one another." The hostility of the world made the discharge of the duties of philanthropy difficult, if not impossible, and so gave an intenser expression to the spirit of *philadelphy*. Differences of sex, class, culture, and race were transcended by the sense of spiritual equality in the common life in Christ.

II.

1. The new commandment not only commends itself to the conscience by *its nature*, it makes its appeal to the heart by *its reason*. It is the love of Christ which constrains the brotherly love of Christians. In presenting as its motive His own love to His disciples, "because I have loved you, that ye also love one another," Jesus reveals His secret. He shows the meaning, worth, and aim of all His

dealings with His disciples, of all His teaching and training of them. There was a restraint and reserve in the relation of Jesus to His disciples in His earthly ministry, which might lead us to misunderstand its character apart from such revealing moments and utterances. Terms of endearment were seldom on His lips; there was no idle indulgence in sentimentality; His disciples would never have thought, as mystics of a latter age even dared to do, of searching the Song of Songs for epithets to apply to Him. Yet what a glimpse into His heart is given us in the saying about His disciples: "Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mark iii. 34, 35). We shall not understand that saying aright if we suppose that Jesus appreciated natural relationships less than other men. He so spoke because He appreciated spiritual relationships so much more than these have ever been by other men. This discourse in the Upper Room lays bare to us at last the heart of Jesus towards His disciples.

2. Love, then, had been the motive of all His teaching and all His training. He did desire and expect love towards Himself. He welcomed every expression of it, as when the sinful woman anointed His feet, and was grieved by any withholding of it, as by His host Simon (Luke vii. 36–50). But the love He sought was no narrow, selfish attachment to His person, but rather a participation in His purpose, an absorption in His spirit, a submission to the same

divine will as He so constantly and absolutely served. He had loved His disciples, not that they might love Him in any such individualist affection, but that they might love one another, in a social devotion. He had said to them, "Come to me, Learn of me, Follow me, Take my yoke," and a personal attachment and surrender to Him was a condition of discipleship. But there was no egoism in His demand, as Christian theology even has sometimes represented it; for affection for Him was fidelity to His cause, entrance into the kingdom of God. As has already been shown, His cause could be maintained, and His kingdom established, only as His personal ministry was continued in the service of a society bound to and made one in Him. In their quarrels the disciples had grieved Him deeply, because they had opposed themselves to the purpose which dominated all His relations to them. Had they not been cleansed by His love from their lovelessness, had the new commandment not been fulfilled as it was by them afterwards, His love for them would have been made of no effect.

III.

1. The reason for the new commandment is the love of Jesus for His disciples; but the love enjoined on them has also its reason; and that is disclosed in *the purpose* of the new commandment stated in the 35th verse. The love of the disciples to one another

will be a sign and proof of their relation to Himself. Here Jesus speaks of all men, while in the seventeenth chapter He speaks of the world; while the terms are not strictly synonymous, they are practically equivalent. Accordingly there appears here a thought which runs through the high-priestly prayer. Jesus prays for Himself, for His disciples, for the world. Here He also sets His relation to His disciples, and theirs to one another, in the widest context. In describing the issue of their obedience to the new commandment as the knowledge of them as His disciples, Jesus does not mean merely that the fact of such a relationship to Himself will be admitted; He surely means that in His disciples the revelation of God found by man in Him will be continued, and so through them men will have the opportunity and the inducement to come into the same relationship with Himself. His love for His disciples, and their love for one another, have as an end the spread of love among all mankind. His individual love and theirs alike have a universal intention: it is not exclusive, but expansive. As His love is to be reproduced in His disciples, so their love is to be reproduced in the world. The small company by love's diffusion is to become a universal society.

2. As unity is the dominating thought of the seventeenth chapter, so is it implied here also. The revelation of the universal love of God in Christ is made in the personal affection of Jesus for His disciples, for His relation to them is continuous with

His relation to God. The love of Jesus for His disciples forms them into a society, of which all the members are bound together by mutual affection: their relation with one another is continuous with His relations to them. The society so formed and maintained is the channel through which the universal revelation at last reaches all mankind. The love which dwells in the heart of Jesus finds its home in the Christian society, and at last makes one family of all mankind. We may be appearing to go beyond the immediate content of the saying of Jesus to His disciples, but we may surely put into the fact of discipleship, thus made known to all men, all that it meant and was worth for Jesus as He prayed for His disciples, and for the world. Through His disciples He meant and hoped to win the world for God.

IV.

1. This new commandment of Jesus is a judgment of, and a challenge to, Christendom. In the early centuries it was obeyed in such measure as to impress even the hostile world; but during many centuries the Christian Church has represented to the world discord rather than unity. What quarrels more bitter have there been than theological disputations? What hatred more fierce than sectarian antagonism? What persecutions more persistent than those of heresy by orthodoxy? Even the memorial feast—symbol not only of the Master's dying love, but also

of the disciples' fellowship in remembering His death —has become a bone of contention, and not a bond of union. The force of the Reformation was weakened by the difference of Luther and Zwingli. How ungraciously have Calvinist and Arminian disputed about the doctrines of grace. Rome despises Anglican orders, and the High Anglican will not recognise his Nonconformist brother as a lawful minister of Jesus Christ. Even in the mission-field the Kikuyu controversy shows a divided Christianity confronting a united Islam. Surely Christ is being more cruelly wounded by those who call themselves His friends than by those who boast themselves His foes.

2. How is the discordant Christendom to be brought to harmony? Only in Christ's own way. It is love which alone is a bond in which there is no bondage. It is not a common creed, code, ritual, or polity that can restore unity, which is not uniformity, but admits diversity. It is very doubtful whether one universal ecclesiastical organisation would be a benefit to mankind; for it would probably exalt authority, and repress freedom; it would aim at fixity, and shrink from progress; it would forge fetters for the future from the precedents and practices of the past. Those who are so possessed by the desire for visible unity in such an organisation forget that love can make itself visible to all men apart from any such means. Charity, tolerance, sympathy, co-operation are all possible without uniformity. In trying to fulfil the new commandment by schemes of reunion we are

falling back from the spirit to the letter, and are more likely to hinder than to help the realisation of the ideal. But if this method is mistaken, the intention is good. And the words of Jesus come across the centuries to us as a constant and urgent challenge. We must move beyond by rising above all sectarianism. We must welcome as a Christian brother, and be ready to join in the fellowship of the Lord's Supper with every man who confesses Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. We must go hand in hand with men of all denominations in making our own land in all its institutions and relations thoroughly Christian. We must fight with them shoulder to shoulder in the battle of the Lord against heathenism. We must let the cause of Christian unity be as dear to our hearts as are the causes of Social Reform and Foreign Missions; for the Church must become one in the love of Christ if it is to be the leaven of human society, and the mustard plant under which mankind will shelter. The disciples were made loving only by the love of Christ, so the unity of Christendom depends on its union with Him. Only as He abides in His Church, and His Church in Him, will it be one, even as Father and Son abide in oneness (John xvii. 20, 21).

IV.

THE CALL TO FAITH.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."—JOHN xiv. 1.

JESUS had during the Supper told His disciples that one of them would betray Him and another deny Him, and that He would depart from them. They had entered the Upper Room with bold ambitions and keen rivalries; for they were still sure that the Messianic kingdom was near at hand, and that fame and power awaited them. Allured by their false hopes to this pleasing vision of glory and dominion on the one hand, and compelled by Jesus' serious words to face the dread reality of failure and loss on the other hand, they were bewildered, harassed, disturbed. They were driven hither and thither, tossed to and fro by the shifting winds of contradictory ideas, varying emotions, and conflicting purposes. Before they could receive the words of comfort and cheer which Jesus desired to speak to them, they must give Him their attention and confidence. He called them to self-possession and self-concentration; they must make an effort to fix

spiritual progress or moral achievement so long as we allow ourselves to be the victims of such a mood. As a kingdom or house divided against itself cannot stand, so also a man. For full effectiveness there must be unity and harmony of soul. The energy of faith is paralysed by such despondency and distrust. A doubting age will not be heroic. Pessimism cannot inspire progress. The mood must be changed. But how? For on the one hand its bonds must be loosened in order that the soul may exercise faith, and on the other hand it is only by faith that the trouble of heart can be removed. It would seem as if we are involved in a contradiction; but it will disappear if we look a little more closely.

4. A normal mind is not the helpless puppet of its own states. It is always more and greater than its thoughts, feelings, and wishes. We need not wait impatiently for some mysterious, magic transformation of our mood from depression to exultation. We cannot, it is true, by one resolve all at once change our disposition. The miserable man cannot will in a moment to become happy. But our subjective state depends on objective conditions; and we can really, if only within a limited range, determine the direction of our attention. We can look away from what casts us down, and we can look to what lifts us up. When our attention is withdrawn from adverse influences and turned towards the favourable, our mood at once begins to change. We, by becoming absorbed in the better, can suppress the worse. As we dwell upon

those realities which inspire confidence the exercise of faith becomes always easier, and with the exercise of faith the inward distress is relieved. What the disciples had to do was to give up thinking their own opinions and forming their own plans, which could only involve them in ever-deeper distress, and to yield themselves to the teaching and the influence of Jesus in which alone lay succour and comfort for them. So, too, we must look beyond ourselves to the certainties of the truth and grace of God in Jesus Christ, and as we fix our gaze upon them, our doubts will be dissolved, our discords will be harmonised, and our difficulties will be removed. Attention turned to the object of faith so alters the mood that the exercise of faith becomes surer and easier.

II.

1. The grammatical ambiguity in the words in which *the call to faith* is given, raises two questions. Does Jesus assume that the disciples have faith and are not exercising it fully, or does their condition appear to Him as one in which faith has yet to be begun? How are the two objects presented for faith related? Does faith move from God to Himself or from Himself to God? As regards the first question, if both verbs are imperatives, then the call to faith implies a rebuke of unbelief. By their trouble of heart the disciples were proving that they had lost the faith in Jesus which they had already confessed,

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they were taking the first step towards apostasy from Him. It is possible that the condition of some of the disciples was as grave as this, and that their disappointment might result in this disaster. But probably their condition was not so hopeless; and Jesus we know judged them with the utmost generosity. He would not charge them with unbelief so far-reaching and deep-rooted so long as any love and loyalty to Himself remained. Both verbs may then be taken as indicatives. Jesus in this case recalls them from their temporary mood to their permanent condition. As pious Jews they did believe in God; as His disciples who had confessed Him as the Messiah they did believe in Him. Their trouble of heart, however, was a contradiction of their faith both in God and in Him. They must get rid of this inconsistency, they must stir up the faith that was in them as it were asleep; the faith that had been allowed to remain idle must become active. Doubt, distrust, indecision were a denial of their faith.

2. Such, too, is the condition of many Christians. They have not renounced their Christian profession: they would be indignant if charged with unbelief. It may be that they have not even questioned a single article of the Christian creed. But they think, feel, and wish as if God in Christ were not real and certain for them at all. In temptation they despair of victory; in trial they yield to utter despondency; in bereavement they surrender themselves to hopeless grief. They order their lives according to the

standards of society, the maxims of the world, and not the teaching, example, and spirit of Christ. In them faith has surely become dormant and impotent, and needs to be stimulated to activity. That condition is not only spiritually and morally ineffective, it is in the highest degree perilous; for a dormant faith may insensibly cease to exist. The vigorous exercise can alone preserve the vital existence of faith. Faith unused soon becomes faith lost. And once this receptivity for God is lost, it is not so quickly or easily renewed. In some crisis of life when the demand for faith is urgent, the man who has allowed his faith to become idle may discover that he cannot exercise it as effectively as the situation requires. If even the disciples, while still in the companionship of Jesus Christ, needed such a call to the exercise of faith, not less, but more urgent for us, who not seeing are called to believe, is the demand not to allow faith to lose aught of its energy.

III.

1. Jesus presents to His disciples *two objects of faith*, God and Himself. Are these objects placed side by side merely? and is faith in the one independent of faith in the other? Or must we not rather suppose that for the mind of Jesus there was a distinct and intimate relation implied if not expressed? If there was such a relation, how are we to conceive it? Were the disciples summoned to believe

in God because they believed in Him, or to believe in Him because they believed in God?

2. There can be no doubt as to the order of their faith in the past. They had begun with belief in God. As pious and patriotic Jews they trusted, worshipped, and served Jehovah as the covenant-God of their nation. They accepted, and expected the fulfilment of, the promise of God regarding the Messiah. Even although the fulfilment had not, according to their expectations, corresponded with the promises, yet they had been led by the teaching and influence of Jesus to confess Him as Messiah. Their faith in God had brought them to faith in Him. He had taught them to regard His death as a necessity of the purpose of God; now let them exercise their faith in God in continuing to believe all that He taught them about the will of God regarding Himself. As they had trusted Him as the Messiah sent of God, let them continue their trust even when it was being put to the test of His separation from them. Let them not now abandon their faith in Him, for to that faith they had been led by their faith in God.

3. While such had been the order of their faith in the past, we may further ask, was it so still? Or had Jesus Himself become more surely and fully the object of their faith than God Himself? Had the acquired relation become a more potent influence than the inherited? Was it now easier for them to trust Jesus than God Himself? Had He made God more real, attractive, and authoritative for them than He

had been before? If so, then the argument implied in Jesus' call would be this. God's purpose for Me may seem mysterious for you. You may not be able to understand why I should suffer and die; but do not doubt or distrust God, for I do not doubt or distrust. If you still trust Me, trust the God I trust. If you still believe Me the Messiah, believe that even in death God is fulfilling His purpose in the Messiah. What follows in this speech suggests that this is the more probable view, for Jesus offers Himself to His disciples as the true and living Way to the Father, and affirms that God is seen in Him. He assumes accordingly that the teaching and the training of His disciples have not been in vain, but that they have such a faith in Him as can be made the basis of their faith in God as, in spite of all present contrary appearances, ordering all things well for Him. He requires them to trust God's providence even when that involves, as He has Himself taught them, betrayal by one disciple, denial by another, and His separation from them all.

4. There can be no doubt as to what is the order of faith for most men to-day. There may be some thinkers who are led to Christianity by way of theism; but most men whose faith is not an inheritance, but an achievement, have come to God because they were first drawn to Christ. Not a few men to-day must begin with the Synoptic Gospels and the Human Jesus. As a man studies, meditates on, becomes absorbed in, and comes under the influence of this

literary testimony, the historical reality of Jesus as truest Teacher, best Example, most loving Friend, lays hold upon him. As he companions with Jesus, he discovers not only more of His truth and grace, but also more about himself, his sinfulness, weakness, and unworthiness. Slowly yet surely he comes to feel that he needs, and that Jesus is, more than Teacher, Example, Friend; and only one word can express what that is, even Saviour. As Saviour, who leads him not only to self-discovery, but even to self-recovery, He as Lord claims the life that He has saved. But in this contact with Jesus there is an immediate and intimate contact with God. It is God's truth that He teaches, God's grace that He imparts, God's forgiveness that He pronounces. As He lives, moves, and has His being in God as Father, the man who trusts and yields himself to Him as Saviour and Lord finds, and cannot but find, God's Fatherhood for himself in Him. When the believer in Jesus realises what forgiveness means for himself, and what it must mean for God, it is likely that he will begin to see a meaning in the Cross of Jesus which he never saw before. As he continues to live the Christian life, and the Saviour and the Lord comes more near, and becomes more dear to him, the historical reality becomes a spiritual presence, for his dealings in his soul's salvation are not with the dead but with the living; and thus the Resurrection becomes credible. It is true that there is endless variety in Christian experience, and not every man's path to God through

Christ will in all details correspond with that which has just been sketched: but more or less the experience described is typical; and it is in some such wise that faith in Jesus leads to faith in God.

5. In this belief in Jesus as the way to God lies the line of least resistance and the point of closest contact for the thought and the life of to-day. It may be that these words may reach some who, Agnostic in head, would be Christian in heart. That is a position of unstable equilibrium, and sooner or later the Agnosticism must suppress the Christianity, or the Christianity must conquer the Agnosticism. A schism in man's inmost life cannot permanently be tolerable. While the desires of the heart must not eject forcibly the doubts of the mind, yet it is now being more and more generally recognised that, even in science, theory has been the servant and not the master of practice. Undeterred by intellectual difficulties it is worth while at least bringing the conscience and the spirit into such contact with Jesus Christ as has been described, and giving Him the opportunity of exercising His influence over a receptive and responsive soul. That influence will not suppress the intellect in favour of the emotions; but in due course what satisfies the conscience and the spirit will also convince the intellect, for in the experience of Christ's truth and grace a moral and spiritual reality will be discovered, which the intellect in its Agnosticism had hitherto ignored. The Universe with Christ experienced as Saviour and Lord is other,

greater, truer, and better than it can appear apart from Him. A man has not allowed himself to apprehend the whole reality of the world which he seeks to understand, if he has not allowed his moral conscience and religious consciousness to test the claims of Jesus Christ. If he gives Jesus Christ the opportunity, he will find, as many have found, that an infinite horizon and an eternal prospect for thought and life have been disclosed in His truth and grace.

V.

THE MANY MANSIONS OF THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."—JOHN xiv. 2.

HAVING secured the faith of the disciples, Jesus gave the *promise of a heavenly home* which was meant and fitted to allay the trouble of heart felt by them. The promise is accompanied by a twofold pledge, the pledge of *His significant silence* and the pledge of *His designed departure.* It has been recently suggested that this verse is an interpolation of a later date intended to meet the difficulty for Christian faith arising from the delay of the expected Second Advent of Jesus and the death of some believers. Paul seeks to meet the same difficulty in 1 Thess. iv. 13–18. Would those who died before Christ's coming in power and glory miss the good and the gain of that fulfilment of the Christian hope? Paul assures the Thessalonian believers that their dead will be raised to share the joy of the Lord's return. The solution which the evangelist, or a later editor, is sup-

posed to offer here is, that God does provide an abode for all believers between their death and the general resurrection. This assumption, however, is gratuitous, unless it is impossible to explain the promise from the context with reference to the needs and the fears of the disciples, and the aims and hopes of Jesus Himself; and such an explanation does not seem at all impossible, even if we exclude all later developments of Christian thought, and try to confine ourselves to a strictly historical interpretation.

I.

1. As regards *the promise of the heavenly home*, two questions call for an answer. What does Jesus mean by "my Father's house"? and what are "the many mansions"? The Greek phrase is not used elsewhere; but in Luke ii. 49 the more probable rendering of the indefinite ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός is "in my Father's house." The temple is described as the house of the Lord in Ps. xxiii. 6. In Ps. xc. 1 it is said of the Lord, "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." If we follow the suggestion of the first passage from the Psalms, we shall describe the Father's house as "the heavenly antitype of the temple, to which Jesus had formerly applied this name." Earth in this case will not be included in, but by contrast with heaven excluded from, the Father's house. If we are guided as to the meaning of the phrase by the second passage, we shall think of the Father's house as con-

stituted by God's presence; and so earth will be included as well as heaven. For Jesus probably the local distinction of earth and heaven did not exist; and, when in the prayer He taught His disciples, He described God as in heaven, or bade them pray for the fulfilment of God's will on earth as in heaven, He had in view a contrast of state. Wherever God is known to be, wherever His nearness is felt with trust and gladness, wherever His favour is enjoyed and His will is done, there is heaven. Throughout the whole of His farewell discourse God is thought of as present and not distant, as revealing and communicating Himself to faith and love, and so the world too is included in the Father's house.

2. On the assumption that by the Father's house is meant heaven in contrast to earth, various explanations of the *many mansions* have been offered. The phrase is supposed to suggest different spheres of service, or different degrees of blessedness; or as the Greek word *μονοί* corresponds to the Latin *stationes*, the halting-places on a Roman march, the word is held to combine the ideas of progress and yet rest in the heavenly life. Also the word *many* is taken to be an assurance that in heaven there is plenty of room for all. In themselves these ideas are all true; and when we want to imagine the fuller life for ourselves, we can include all of them in our picture; but all we can claim is that the phrase here used has suggested these features, not that any one of them is expressly affirmed by it. If, however, we take the Father's house as embracing the

whole universe because of God's presence in it, we shall be led to another view of the phrase "many mansions." In ver. 10 Jesus thus describes his relation to the Father: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." In view of the use of the word *μένων* in the last clause, we may give the first clause the meaning, the Father is the Son's *mansion* or abode, and the Son is the Father's *mansion* or abode. In ver. 23 again we read: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode (*μονήν*) with him." The man who loves and obeys the Son will be the *mansion* or abode of both Father and Son. Again, in chap. xv. 1–10, the disciple is represented as having his abode in, and as himself being the abode of the Master. To be conscious of God's presence about us as our abode, and of God's presence in ourselves as God's abode, is to dwell in one of the mansions of the Father's house. Not in heaven as contrasted with earth are many mansions, for here on earth God is man's, and man is God's mansion.

3. If this is the meaning of the two phrases "my Father's house" and "many mansions," what did Jesus mean by His assurance at this time to His disciples? Was He thinking of earth exclusively, and was His promise to His disciples this, that while in their sensible companionship with Him they had

realised God's presence within and without, and so had been in one of the mansions, yet His departure from them would be followed by such a spiritual fellowship with Him that God's presence would still be with them, and thus they would be still in the Father's house, if in another mansion? This thought is entirely and certainly true. One mode of the divine immanence was to be followed by another, the Incarnation of the Son of God by the Inspiration of the Spirit of God within humanity. One mode of human communion with the divine was to be followed by another, the sensible intercourse of Jesus with His disciples by the operation of the Spirit of God in them. But this is not all that the promise means.

4. Jesus is here casting the light of His revelation on the dark mystery of death. Christian thought has not been mistaken in finding here the assurance that beyond death the Father's love reaches, and keeps His children safe and happy. The fact which filled the minds of the disciples was Jesus' departure from them by death. Before they could assign any meaning to a promise of a spiritual instead of a sensible fellowship with Him by His Spirit, they must be assured that death would not and could not end all, that He their Master would live and work in God after His death as He had done hitherto. The assurance of Jesus does not refer in the first clause, although it does in the last, primarily to the disciples, but to Himself. He is assuring them that for Him there is another mansion in the Father's house after His departure

from them. In His earthly life He has had His abode in God; He is in His departure from them in His death passing into another abode for heavenly life. While the Jews generally, with the exception of the Pharisees, believed in the resurrection from the dead, that belief had not affected the cheerless, hopeless view of the continuance of existence after death. When Jesus sought to comfort Martha with the assurance, "Thy brother shall rise again," she derived little consolation from her confession, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (xi. 23, 24). The interval supposed to come between death and the resurrection was for Jewish belief still shrouded in dark and dread mystery. It is this mystery Jesus now removes. Even at death He will pass into another mansion of the Father's house. Is this foresight of God's dealing with Himself in death unintelligible and incredible, even as rooted in and springing out of His insight into His relation to God as Son to Father? Surely not. While in relation to the context the assurance refers primarily to Jesus Himself, yet the reference is not exclusive. It was His vocation to bring men into relation with God as Father; and He was not likely to claim for Himself a privilege that He would withhold from others. While for the immediate situation He must assure His disciples that His own death meant only passing into another mansion of the Father's house, yet that assurance included the promise, stated more explicitly in the last clause of this verse, and in the next verse, that for

them too, when death came, it would be only a change of one mansion for another.

II.

1. From this promise we may pass to the pledges given. The A.V. and the R.V. suggest two distinct pledges, as the only difference between them is the insertion in the R.V. of the conjunction *for* between the two parts of the sentence; the *designed departure* is thus given as the reason for the *significant silence*: and yet each may still be regarded as a distinct pledge. But Dr. Moffatt in his *New Translation* so connects the clauses that only one pledge is given, since he renders as follows: "Were it not so, would I have told you I was going to prepare a place for you?" The pledge in this rendering would be Jesus' already given promise. Even if we place chaps. xv. and xvi. between the two parts of xiii. 31, as Dr. Moffatt does, we cannot find any so definite a promise. Jesus does promise the coming of the Spirit and His own return to His disciples, but not the preparation of a place for them. We may then still follow the A.V. or R.V. rendering, and shall do no injustice to the thought if we think of two distinct pledges.

2. To what does the significant silence refer? If there were not many mansions in the Father's house, what would Jesus have told them? The question can be answered in two ways. Jesus might

possibly be referring to the hope, deeply rooted in the human soul, of immortality; and His words might be taken to mean that, if such a hope were altogether delusive, it would have been His duty to deny it, and to bring men back from illusion to reality. But it is improbable that He assumed that there were any such thoughts in the minds of His disciples; and so we must seek another answer.

It is assuredly not far to seek. Jesus had been revealing God's Fatherhood, His universal and constant bounty to, care over, and grace towards men. Such a love could not be confined to the present life; such a relation could not be ended by death. Because God is Father, it is a necessary and even legitimate inference that there are many mansions in His house. This view finds confirmation in Jesus' argument against the Sadducees: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32); that God has fellowship with men is a guarantee of human immortality. Did God's love not warrant such a hope, He who revealed that love would have indicated this limitation; He would not have suffered men to deceive themselves by the very truth he had taught.

3. We are entitled to give to this principle a wider scope. Our Christian faith need not limit its prospect and horizon by the express words of Jesus about God's Fatherhood. While inferences must be drawn with caution from the truth He taught, and we should distrust a merely theoretical logic, yet there

is a logic of life and love which may discover implicit in His truth what was not explicit in His words. We cannot expect too much from the love of God, so long as our expectations are consistent with the character of that love. Christian theology is warranted in developing the implications of the doctrine of God's Fatherhood, even when there is no express warrant of the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, so long as there is no clear contradiction by that teaching. We may even go a step farther. Reverting to the first answer suggested to the question before us, we may even affirm that where the revelation of God in Christ does not contradict, supersede, or annul human ideals and inspirations, which seem true to reason, worthy to conscience, and precious to the heart, it confirms in completing them. What Christ does not deny, if it be consistent with, and deducible from His revelation, He approves by *significant silence.*

III.

1. But the promise of *the heavenly home* is pledged not only by His *significant silence,* but also by His *designed departure.* He had been constantly assuring the disciples that His death was no accident, but a necessity according to the divine purpose. He must complete His ministry among and unto men by giving His life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28). He was offering His life as the sacrifice of the new covenant between God and man (xxvi. 28); it was

expedient for them that He should go, for His departure was the condition of the Spirit's presence with them (John xvi. 7); there could be for them another mansion in the Father's house only as He prepared it for them. The work of Christ is a unity, and therefore we must regard all these objects of the death of Christ as intimately and inseparably related to one another.

2. Whatever theory we may hold of the atonement, the common testimony of the New Testament is that His sacrifice was the condition of man's salvation. While God's eternal disposition of love towards mankind was not changed by the death of Jesus, the historical dispensation of grace was constituted in that death. The Old Testament saints did enjoy fellowship with God in this life, and had therein a guarantee of fellowship in the life beyond; and yet the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares of them with profound insight: "These all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (xi. 40). Even they could not enter into the fulness of the perfection, glory, blessedness of immortality apart from the fulfilment of God's dispensation of grace in Jesus Christ. It belonged then to Jesus' preparation of a place for His disciples, a mansion in the Father's house, that He in His sacrifice tasted death for every man (Heb. ii. 9). Only in the

relation of human faith in the divine grace in Christ can the promise of the heavenly home find its fulfilment.

3. But the disciples must themselves be prepared for the place being prepared for them. In the earthly companionship they had not yet been made fit and worthy to pass from the earthly to the heavenly mansion of the Father's house. Their relation to Jesus must be developed and completed in their spiritual communion, and that stage of development would have been delayed and hindered by His visible presence. We sometimes wish that we had been alive in the days of Jesus on earth, as it seems to us that the Christian life in His earthly companionship would have been easier for us. But such facts are against the fond fancy. The apostles of the Acts are better and wiser men than the disciples of the Gospels.

4. If Christ be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, the significance and value of His person and work cannot be confined to earth and time. The Epistle to the Hebrews has much to say of His Heavenly Intercession. He Himself did mean something when He described to His disciples His continual ministry in the unseen as the preparation of a place for them. While we must abstain from the idle indulgence of our imagination, and many Christian hymns have probably gone beyond the bounds of serious thought and sober feeling in descriptions of heaven, yet we may venture to

believe that this preparation of a place for us means that the future life will be ordered perfectly by the saving grace and the sacrificial love of the Lord who died for us. If we may follow the guidance of an inspired utterance such as 1 John iii. 2, "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is," detaching it from its immediate reference to the Second Advent, we are led to the hope that the preparation of a place for us means a still fuller and clearer manifestation of God in Christ in the heavenly home than was possible in the earthly; and that this will have as its twofold consequence, a more immediate and intimate communion, and a greater and a growing resemblance to the Saviour and Lord so revealed to us. He too prepares a place for us as the pattern and the pledge of our victory over death and our entrance into heaven. "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20). As a forerunner Jesus entered for us within the veil. In Him our humanity has triumphed over death and achieved heaven; it is a new order which has begun in Him, and to which we now belong—a humanity already redeemed which will be glorified in Him. The Fatherhood of God, the nature of which He revealed and the purpose of which He realised, holds earth and heaven, time and eternity in its embrace; and accordingly, if our faith claims His grace, now and hereafter our abode is in God.

VI.

RETURN, RECEPTION, AND REUNION.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—JOHN xiv. 3.

SO closely is this verse connected with the preceding, that our interpretation of the one must govern the sense that we assign to the other. What may be called the apocalyptic interpretation is thereby excluded. It is not the Second Advent, as expected by the first Christian generation, which is referred to. For on the one hand the language would have conformed more to the current phraseology about that anticipation, and on the other the context offers no points of contact for such an interpretation. But two other explanations are possible. What is obvious is that Jesus here promises a *return* to, a *reception* of, and a *reunion* with, His disciples; but what each of them will mean must be determined by the standpoint we assume, the eschatological or the experimental. Is this a hope which the believer may cherish in view of his death, or is it an experience which may here and now be claimed by Christian faith? Or are these

alternatives not mutually exclusive? Has the promise of Jesus both a present and a future reference? If the Father's house embraces earth as well as heaven, if the life now as well as the life beyond may be an abiding in God in the companionship of Jesus Christ, if in Him man's time is taken up into God's eternity, then we may give the experimental interpretation without excluding the eschatological, as in the present life begins the process which the future life brings to its consummation.

I.

1. It is impossible to read the New Testament with an open mind without being led to the conclusion that the early Christian Church expected the Return of the Lord in power and glory within the first generation. For that expectation, which history has proved mistaken in its literal form, warrant could be found in those parts of the teaching of Jesus in which the current apocalyptic thought seems to be reproduced. The tendency of recent scholarship is to lay excessive and almost exclusive emphasis on this aspect of the teaching of Jesus. Schweitzer in his well-known book, the *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, seeks to prove by a review of the history of opinions on this question that we are shut up to the alternative of *thoroughgoing scepticism* or *thoroughgoing eschatology*. While it must be conceded that this contemporary influence on the mind of Jesus has hitherto been unduly neglected, yet this tendency has been carried to an extreme.

In order that this theory may be consistently carried out, many features of the teaching of Jesus must be set aside, which commend themselves as genuine to the reason and conscience, alike by their moral and their spiritual value. It is not impossible that the opinions of the early Christian Church have coloured the transmission of the teaching of Jesus, and made it appear more eschatological and apocalyptic than it really was. It is probable, too, that Jesus used the current eschatological terminology in a free poetic way, and not with prosaic literalness, to set forth figuratively the course of the divine providence as He was led to conceive it.

2. In the Fourth Gospel, while there are occasional indications of the apocalyptic view, the expectation of Christ's coming has been transformed. It is here represented not as an external manifestation, but as an internal transformation. The Son comes, and the Father in Him, and makes His abode in the believer through the Holy Spirit. The Christ does not return in clouds of glory with attendant hosts of angels; but the Godhead makes the believing and obedient heart His habitation. This is the standpoint of this farewell speech of Jesus, and must govern our interpretation of the text. It is true that it is maintained by many scholars that this change of view is entirely due to the evangelist. He lived and taught when the apocalyptic hopes had been disappointed. The Second Advent had not come with, or followed at once after, the fall of Jerusalem. Many believers had died with-

out sharing the joy of the fulfilment of the promise of the Second Coming. The evangelist's theology is said to be an attempt to meet the needs of the new situation. This Second Coming now is transformed into a constant coming of Christ in His Spirit to the believer. The historical trustworthiness of the Fourth Gospel is too large a question to be here discussed; but I may be allowed to express my growing conviction that Jesus Himself took this more spiritual and ethical view, and, while continuing to speak in parables, and not plainly, to those who could not yet receive the truth, taught His disciples what the evangelist alone had the insight to understand, and so the interest to preserve and record.

3. While the apocalyptic view of the Second Advent has been disproved by history, this spiritual view of the presence of the Lord in His Church was confirmed in the experience of the evangelist himself, and of the Apostle Paul. It has been finding continued confirmation in the experience of Christian believers in all generations. While the evangelist writes as an eye-witness of the earthly life of Jesus, yet he also writes as one who is enjoying present communion with the Living Lord. Even supposing Jesus did not say all that the evangelist here reports, he would not and could not have put on the lips of Jesus such teaching unless his own experience suggested it to him. Is it not probable that it was the presence of Jesus that made his experience possible, and not his experience that led him to attribute the

promise to Jesus? Is it not an impressive confirmation that Paul, who was no eye-witness of the earthly life, and who kept to the end the more primitive view of the Second Advent, nevertheless in describing his own inner life always represents it as a fellowship with the living Lord? It is not a Jesus of the past to whom he looks back, or only a Christ in the future to whom he looks forward, but he ever looks up to a present Saviour and Lord. To him to live is Christ; he is crucified and risen with Christ; he lives because Christ lives in him. Throughout all the intervening centuries this is the highest Christian experience, the fellowship with the living Christ. Is it likely that Jesus did not know what He would prove to be to Christian faith?

II.

1. We are justified in giving to the text before us the spiritual interpretation. The *return* of Jesus to the disciples did take place when they became conscious of His Presence with them, and His Power upon them. Without now discussing the evidence for, or the nature of, the appearances of the Risen Lord to His chosen witnesses, we may assert as a historical fact that the certainty that Christ lived and reigned was seized and held fast by the faith of the primitive community. It was only when this conviction had taken full possession of their minds that the disciples were filled with the holy enthusiasm of Pentecost. The Lord's return was the condition of the Spirit's presence and

power in the Christian Church. In the growth in grace of believers, in the progress of the gospel, in the judgment on the nation which had rejected Him, in the victory of the Christian Church over the Roman Empire, faith could recognise His constant coming. To the Christian believer to-day Christ often comes in the gracious influences of the Christian home, so that the human heart becomes the divine home slowly without any sense of the change: in repentance, faith, conversion, He comes to others. For the Christian Church also there are returns of the Lord in mercy as in judgment, in assurances of the sufficiency of His grace, or penitences for failure in faith and duty. And as the Church looks out upon the world, it may discern in human history divine providence, and in divine providence the coming of the Christ of God to reign with ever fuller and wider sovereignty.

2. If we can thus conceive the return of Christ, the *reception* of the disciples unto Himself surely means the process by which the believer comes to clearer knowledge, deeper devotion, and fuller obedience. As the mind receives more fully His truth, as the heart gives richer response to His love, as the life is more thoroughly consecrated to His service, He is taking the soul to Himself and making it His own. Such a process of reception may be witnessed in the Apostolic Age. For instance, we can trace in the Acts of the Apostles a progress in the apprehension even by the Apostles of the truth about the person and the work of Jesus as the Christ of God. The

Jerusalem community did not at once understand the purpose of Christ regarding the Gentiles, and it was only slowly that it was made willing to admit Gentile and Jew on equal terms. Throughout the history of the Christian Church this receiving of the Church by Christ has been going on. Whenever a truth of the Gospel is freed from the errors which hitherto have hidden it, and hindered its acknowledgment, whenever a new duty in human relationships is recognised as demanded by obedience to Christ, whenever spheres of influence till then neglected are claimed for the Spirit of God, whenever the borders of the kingdom of God are widened, the change may be described as Christ receiving the Church unto Himself. And as the Church is thus received, through the testimony or influence of the Church the world will be received by Christ unto Himself.

3. The *reunion* with Christ, which is the result of the *return* of and *reception* by Christ, is expressed in terms of space, "that where I am, there ye may be also." But that does not confine us to any local interpretation; for throughout this discourse Jesus uses terms of space to describe spiritual conditions. He is going where the disciples cannot now follow Him. He is going to the Father. He is for them the way to the Father. To be where Christ is, then, need not mean only to be in the same place as He is. To be near Him for a soul unlike Him would be not heaven, but hell. What the reunion means is our uninterrupted communion with Him through an entire

consecration to Him, and a complete resemblance. Such a reunion is not effected in a moment, but is a process, for too many Christians so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. This, however, is the goal of the Christian course, and its constant characteristic. A man is a Christian as he lives with Christ, and Christ lives with him. There may be genuine Christian experience and sincere Christian character where this sense of personal communion is not developed, but the typical Christian life is the life of oneness in fellowship with Him. To be with Christ, where Christ is, is to be where God as Father is revealed, where truth is disclosed, where love abounds, where holiness reigns, where peace abides, where joy is full, where victory is assured, where sorrow passes into song, where death is not, and where eternal life is. This is the good which Christ offers the soul in Himself.

III.

1. While the general reference of the text may be, in view of the context, to *the spiritual process* thus described, yet as in the interpretation of the previous verse so also of this there is a special reference to death and the hereafter, for Jesus uttered these words of comfort and cheer, help and hope, to disciples who were troubled in heart because of His departure from them in His death. Because Jesus thus returns to His disciples, receives them, and is reunited to them in the present spiritual experience, we may boldly venture to

believe that He is to the soul which trusts Him the same in death as in life, hereafter as now. Christian thought is by no means so clear and sure about what death means for the believer as is often taken for granted. There is the hope of the general resurrection; there is conjecture about an intermediate state; there is the assumption that believers at once pass into heaven. Paul at one time expected to survive till the Second Advent and the general resurrection. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). But at another time he feared he would die before that hope could be fulfilled, and one can surely detect a wistful tone in the assurance he offers himself that he will not be found naked, but clothed upon with a habitation from heaven (2 Cor. v. 1–3). The condition of the believer between death and the general resurrection remained a problem in the early Christian Church, and for some Christian thinkers is a problem still. The solution of an immediate entrance into heaven is assumed rather than justified by Christian thought. What light does our text throw upon it?

2. We cannot now conceive the general resurrection in the literal form in which the Apostolic Age anticipated it. Even if the fulfilment of God's purpose of grace in the world should be marked by some cosmic transformation, some divine manifestation which we cannot now imagine, we cannot think of our beloved dead as in an unconscious condition, as reduced in vitality until their personality is restored to them fully

in the end of this age, as has sometimes been conjectured on the basis of a too literal interpretation of the New Testament teaching on a theme where inevitably language must be figurative and suggestive. It is reasonable to suppose that the fruition of heaven's perfection, glory, blessedness waits the fulfilment of God's purpose on earth. As the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews believed that the believers under the old covenant were not made perfect apart from the believers under the new, concerning whom God had provided some better thing (xi. 40), so we may believe that the world's redemption will complete even the life of heaven. It is reasonable also to suppose that there is a moral and a spiritual continuity between this life and the next, and that physical death does not and cannot in a moment complete the development of the soul in truth, goodness, and love. While we may well believe that with this earthly life the occasions for, and temptations to, sin will cease, yet even a sinless development may be progressive. Even if the text does not teach the truth directly, it is a truth that there are *stations* on the soul's onward march.

3. Giving due weight to these two considerations, namely, that the completion of each soul depends on the fulfilment of God's purpose in the world, and that there will be room for, and need of, progress in the future life, we may for our comfort and hope apply this text to the believer's experience of death. When he descends into the Valley of the Shadow, while no human helper or comforter can go with him—and is

not this human impotence sorrow's crowning sorrow in the experience of bereavement?—the darkness will be turned to day; for the Conqueror of death will draw nearer than ever, and His closer companionship will sustain the soul. Even if it be not the historical exegesis of the verse, the words so express the Christian's confidence that we may make bold always to use them in this connection. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. xxiii. 4). Whether, according to the changing fashions of the hour, it be esteemed good or bad art, Sir Noel Paton's picture *Lux in Tenebris* embodies the Christian hope. Has He not already drawn near in the experience of the dying, even before the dark and drear shadows fall? The quiet confidence with which a woman, timid by nature, dependent in her spiritual life on the influence of others, faces death, and faces it fully conscious that the human strength which has hitherto helped her cannot go with her, is surely proof that Christ Himself has come. He, having prepared the soul for the place and the place for the soul, comes again with a fulness of comfort, help, and hope which had never before been experienced, because never before so needed. As we see our loved ones enter the valley, as we turn our own faces thither, we may see there Jesus and Jesus only; and so Light in the Shadows.

4. Our love cannot but linger about the portal of death, and try to follow the loved ones into the new

life. How many must be the changes, how keen the surprises, how great the wonders! But surely the new experiences, whatever they may be, will be no strain to the soul, for all will be blessed as Christ's reception of His beloved unto Himself. There will be no dread of mystery, no shrinking from the unknown, for the truth, love, and grace of Jesus Christ will then be the soul's welcome; and life's best experiences will be continued through death unto the life eternal. The fellowship begun on earth with Him will then endure, uninterrupted by the soul's failure to exercise the faith which claims His grace, unbroken by the intrusion of sin, and unshadowed by the darkness of doubt or fear, pain or grief. He for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame (Heb. xii. 2); and it is this His joy that the soul He has redeemed with His precious blood will share. It cannot enter into our heart to conceive all that Christ is preparing for those that love Him; but such imaginations are surely not vain, but are love's abundant provision for love's extreme necessity.

VII.

THE KNOWN WAY UNKNOWN.

"And whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, how know we the way?"—JOHN xiv. 4, 5.

THE promises given by Jesus in ver. 4 can be fulfilled by Him only on one condition: His departure from visible presence and earthly companionship with the disciples by His death; and accordingly in vers. 4 and 5 He returns to the thought in order that He may lift the dark veil that hangs over death, and assure the disciples that He is not passing into distance, silence, darkness, mystery, but that their faith may follow Him with the certainty of His destination. He assumes that the disciples know His *destination*, because they have understood the *direction* of His life; but Thomas' confession quickly shows that the assumption was, in the case of the disciples at least, unjustified; they knew not the *destination*, because they had not understood the *direction* of the life of Jesus. We must now look more closely at the grounds Jesus had for making the assumption,

and then at the reasons why the disciples failed to meet His expectations.

I.

1. In asserting that the disciples knew the way whither He was going Jesus made a threefold assumption. (*a*) In *the first place*, He assumed that His experience and His character, His purpose and His conduct had been understood by His disciples. For three years He had been teaching and training them in an intimate communion. He had not only allowed them to receive His public teaching, but He had revealed to them mysteries of the kingdom of God which were spoken to the multitude only in parables. He expected that as a result they would have a discernment of, and sympathy with, His inner life as others could not have. They did partially respond to His confidence. While among the multitude there was division of opinion about His person, that He was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets (Matt. xvi. 14), Peter on behalf of the other disciples confessed Him the Christ, the Son of the living God (ver. 16). Often, however, they disappointed His expectations of being understood. "How is it that ye did not understand?" was a complaint He had on several occasions to make against them. His frequent disappointments did not, however, destroy His constant confidence. He keeps on with His teaching and training, and He lives His inner life before them. Instead of limiting Himself to what

they could readily and easily grasp and hold, He seeks to develop their intelligence and sympathy by making large demands on their minds and hearts. And that is surely the best way of making the best of men. Wiser is it by far to expect too much than too little of men. In the effort to respond to the appeal of such confidence men make themselves capable of what had hitherto been quite beyond them. Disappointments there may be when the expected response fails; but better such disappointment than a content with less serious and earnest endeavours to raise men above their lower, which may become their abiding selves. In our dealing with others our confidence in will be the measure of our influence over others.

2. The second assumption Jesus makes is the *general principle* which has already been mentioned, but may now be more fully explained and justified. It may be briefly expressed thus, *the direction of a life determines, and so indicates, its destination.* Making all due allowance for the factor of freedom and the fact of conversion in human life, nevertheless this principle holds good in the majority of cases. There is a consistency of character and a continuity of conduct on which we reckon in our opinions of and dealings with our fellow-men. Can this feature of our present life suddenly cease at death? We need not misquote Scripture: "In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it lie" (Eccles. xi. 3), in order to affirm that at the moment of death the eternal destiny is irrevocably fixed, as such an

assumption would invest a physical process with a moral and spiritual significance which we have not sufficient warrant to assign to it. But just as unwarranted would be the assumption that the future life as regards its moral and spiritual condition is unrelated to the present experience and character. He that is holy will continue holy still, and he that is filthy will continue filthy still (Rev. xxii. 11). The future destination may be inferred from the present direction of the life. This can be affirmed even more confidently of the good than of the bad. While all the divine resources are available to turn the bad man from his evil way, they are assured to keep the saint in his holy path. If the direction of the life is towards truth, goodness, love, the destination cannot but be a perfect, blessed, and glorious immortality.

3. The third assumption Jesus made was that, applying this general principle to His own life as understood by His disciples, they could not but come to the conclusion, that as He had ever lived in, with, and for the Father, so His departure from them could be only to the Father, to another mansion in the Father's house. If they believed in God at all as the God of truth and righteousness, they must believe in Him that His life of devotion to, and even sacrifice for, truth and righteousness, could not end in failure and defeat, but must end in deliverance and blessing. If they believed in Him as true and holy they must believe in God that He would not forsake Him even

when all the powers of evil were leagued against Him. A life of such absolute sonship in trust, love, and obedience towards God could not, in spite of all appearances, end otherwise than in the eternal home in God. In doubting, fearing, and questioning what the issue would be for their Master, the disciples were showing either that they did not grasp the general principle, that he who knows the way of a man's life can know also whither he is going, or that they were failing to make the particular application of it which was alone possible in the case of Jesus, that his Fatherward life could end only in another mansion in the Father's house.

4. These three assumptions, implied in the expectation of Jesus, which His disciples, however, disappointed, lead us to a conclusion of far-reaching importance. Men are anxious and curious about the future life. They try to convince themselves of its certainty, and even to conjecture in some measure its nature. Foolish and vain have been many of the guesses which have been made. The poetic language of Scripture has sometimes been turned into very plain prose. In the principle we have been discussing is a sure clue to guide us through the labyrinth of questions which may be asked. If a human relationship, such as the close union of husband and wife in devoted affection, has been a potent influence in the development of the personality of each in truth, love, and goodness, we are warranted in assuming that, while all in it which necessarily belongs to

the existing physical or social order will cease at death, as the words of Jesus seem to teach (Matt. xxii. 30), yet the moral and spiritual treasure of mutual love, as by its worth heavenly, will remain, even when the earthen vessel which contained it has ceased to be. Whatever here and now has the sign-manual of God's character and purpose is assured of the permanence of the eternal God Himself. If we could only apprehend firmly the continuity of the present and the future life, and appreciate fully the value of the moral and spiritual, many of our doubts, fears, and questions about the Hereafter would be resolved.

II.

1. Jesus' expectation was disappointed, as Thomas' confession showed. Did he speak only for himself or for the other disciples also? That he frankly stated his own condition, the other indications of his disposition certainly lead us to believe. It was he who, loyal though hopeless, proposed to his fellow-disciples to accompany Jesus to Bethany. "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John xi. 16). It was he, too, who would not believe that the Lord had risen, until he had compelling sensible proof. When the proof was given, however, he readily and fully confessed his faith He missed the highest blessedness, because he would not believe until he had seen (John xx. 24–29). That he was describing the condition of other disciples is shown by the

questions afterwards asked by Philip (ver. 8) and Judas (ver. 22). It is not improbable that in that disciple company the evangelist was the only one who was grasping the meaning and gaining the worth of the words of Jesus, as he alone has preserved the memory of the conversation in the Upper Room. We may then without injustice assume that Thomas was in his confession of ignorance typical of the rest of the company with this one exception.

2. It was not because the disciples were lacking altogether in love and loyalty that they did not understand Jesus. With the exception of Judas Iscariot they returned to their allegiance to their Master. Thomas was ready to die with Him, so also was Peter, although, when he was tested, his strength failed; so doubtless were they all, even although, overcome by sudden fear, they all forsook Him and fled when He was arrested. In personal relations love is a condition of knowledge and understanding; and love's judgment is not so blind as cynicism is prone to assume. It does not merely invent, but it really discerns, the value it often finds in a life which to the loveless seems worthless. But there are two degrees or stages rather than kinds of love, for the one may grow into the other; and these are supposed to be indicated in the two Greek words *φιλία* and *ἀγάπη* (John xxi. 15–17). There is an attachment which has little insight, moral or spiritual, and so does not fathom the depths of personality, although even this sees deeper into reality than can

indifference and hostility. There is an affection which has the necessary discernment to press into the sanctuary of the spirit, and so to grasp and hold all the treasure that is hidden within. We may say of the disciple company generally that they had the *φιλία* but not the *ἀγάπη*. This discernment is not an accident or a mystery; it is the result of kindred aspirations and purposes. Like knows like. The disciples did not rise from *φιλία* to *ἀγάπη*, because they were not yet spiritually and morally conformed to Jesus. Had they done His will more freely, they had known His person more fully.

3. Thomas did not lack the lower stage of love, but he lacked faith and hope, and so also failed to rise to the higher stage of love itself. The Epistle to the Hebrews defines faith as "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen" (xi. 1), and Dr. Moffatt in his *New Translation* brings out the meaning very well. "New faith means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see." Hope is rooted in faith, and, if we are to distinguish them at all, we may regard hope as the same attitude of conviction, confidence, committal towards the future as faith is towards the unseen. As Jesus' gentle reproof of Thomas shows (John xx. 29), he was enslaved by the visible. He would not trust where he could not see. The reality of the Sonship of Jesus, which gave the guarantee of His destiny in God, was not with outward observation. No external appearances, wealth, power, pomp, bore

witness to His worth. Thomas and the other disciples failed to apprehend, appreciate, and accept the goodness and grace of Christ as the ultimate reality, the manifestation and communication of God Himself. True words, helpful deeds, loving influence, and saving grace did not appeal to them as the distinctively and absolutely divine. A political emancipation, a secular dominion, power, and prosperity were what they were looking for in the Messiah; and so, with all their love and loyalty, they failed to recognise the significance and value of the Master whose teaching they had heard, whose works they had witnessed, whose influence they had felt in some measure, if not completely. Had they had more faith in Him, they would have understood Him better.

4. From this lack of faith sprang lack of hope. Thomas was ready to go and die with Jesus, and he did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. When there is not faith in the invisible, there will not be hope for the future. The disciples had cherished bright expectations at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus; perhaps some of them were cherishing them still; but every step Jesus was taking was making it more difficult for them to keep their hopefulness. Judas, quite disillusioned, had gone forth to betray. Thomas had yielded himself to despondency; for when false expectations disappoint, it is hard to recover true hope. As he had failed to discern the invisible sonship, so he caught no glimpse of the future mansion in the Father's

house. Each announcement of death had been accompanied by a reference to resurrection; but the assurance seems to have fallen on deaf ears, for Thomas knew not whither Jesus was going. Because the disciples had, in their absorption in other plans and aims, failed to share with Jesus His purpose of obedience to His Father's will in His sacrifice, they had missed His confidence that death would be followed by resurrection, that His departure from them was an ascent to the Father. Had the disciples only discerned the Fatherward direction of the experience and character, purpose and conduct of their Master, they would have had no difficulty in discovering that His destination was not a shameful and a cruel death, although that was a station on the Godward march, but victory over death, the glory—and more even than the glory—which He had with the Father from the beginning.

5. Profitless, however, is it for us to judge the disciples. The picture of their condition just given is of value to us only as it becomes a mirror in which we see ourselves. Does the life of Jesus disclose all its meaning and worth to us? Does it give us the certainty that He who so lived unto God now lives in God? In Him do we trust and hold God and immortality? Love, faith, and hope are the spiritual senses by which we know Him, and the Father and eternal life in Him. We may apply to ourselves the threefold test we have applied to the disciples. Has our love, if indeed we do love, risen

from the stage of *φιλία* to the stage of *ἀγάπη*, from an attachment with little insight into an affection with a growing discernment of the treasures hidden in the sanctuary of His personality? Scholarship has indeed done a great deal, for which we cannot be too grateful, to give us knowledge of the surroundings of Jesus, not physical, social, and political merely, but even intellectual, moral, and spiritual. But there is one thing scholarship cannot do, and His love can. The secret of Jesus eludes, and cannot but elude, a disinterested science. To be known as He is in His truth and grace He must be loved, and He can be so loved as to be known only if He is obeyed. We can discover His value to us only as what He valued becomes of value to us. Only as we set aside our own plans, wishes, and aims and submit ourselves to the will of God, which it was His meat and drink to fulfil, can we become His intimates through love's discernment.

6. But such an obedience is possible only through faith. His attitude to the invisible, the divine, the Father must become ours. We must believe, trust in, surrender to the supremacy of, the spiritual over the material, the sovereignty of the ideal over the actual, in short, to God the infinite and absolute perfection as the ultimate reality, nay even as in comparison with all that derives from and depends on Him the only real. Thought and life must be possessed and dominated by certainty of, confidence in, and consecration to truth, love, holiness, which are

God. Jesus Himself is the "pioneer and perfecter of faith" (Heb. xii. 2), and through the faith of which He is the object we shall be gradually conformed to the faith of which He is the subject, believing in Him we shall come to believe like Him. As we come to Him, learn of Him, follow Him, take His yoke, we shall share His sonship. United to God in Him by faith, the future will be assured to us in hope. If we are, in dependence on Him, following the direction of His life, His destination in God is through Him assured to us. We know, as He knew, whither we are going, by the Fatherward path to one of the many mansions in the Father's house. Is this too wide a horizon, too far a prospect for any whom these words reach? This is the end; but as Christ is the end, so also is He the beginning; and if the sense of the need of God, and the assurance of the grace of God should lead any to make a venture of faith, that venture assuredly will find its verification in the Christian course and the Christian goal.

VIII.

THE TRUE AND LIVING WAY.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me."—JOHN xiv. 6.

THE confession of Thomas, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way," compels Jesus to lay aside all figurative language, through which the prosaic minds of the disciples could not pierce to the moral and spiritual truth taught, and to declare plainly that the Father is His *destination*, and the destination of men in Him, and that He Himself in His life and teachings has shown, and is, the *direction* in which men must move to reach that destination. The goal of man's life is the Father, and the *only* course which can bring men to that goal is Himself, and that for two reasons: because He as the truth brings God to men by His revelation, and because He as the life brings men to God by His redemption. The clause, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," is a Hebraic mode of expression, and in our English fashion of speech would be expressed, "I am the true and the living

way," or "I am the way as the truth and the life." We must consider—first, the goal, the Father; and next, the way.

I.

1. Language is too poor to express spiritual relations adequately and accurately, but we must often use terms of space. Jesus speaks of going to the Father Himself, and of men coming to the Father by Him, when He does not mean a change of place, but a change of state. To come to the Father means for man to think God's truth, to do God's holy will, to feel God's joy, to live in God's love. It is the mental, moral, and spiritual ascent of the human personality to the fulness of light, life, and love in the divine personality. Man is made by God for God, and becomes himself only as he becomes one with God, not in an impersonal absorption, but in a personal union. His personality has the ideals of truth, blessedness, holiness, and love; and its development depends on the realisation of these. Apart even from the frustration of his development by sin, that realisation is always incomplete. God for him is the eternal and infinite reality of all those ideals; and they can be realised in him only as he becomes united to God in the faith which claims God's grace, the descent of the divine perfection to human necessity. It is the affinity of man with God, the necessity of God for man, the completion of man in God, the satisfaction of man with God, which is meant by man's

sonship; and God's Fatherhood is the counterpart of this: the creation of man in His own image, His condescension to man, His development of man, and the participation in His own blessedness to which He raises man.

2. The fact of sin, however, as it hinders man's realisation of his sonship, so it affect's God's manifestation and communication of His Fatherhood. Sin is not merely an arrest of man's development Godwards; it is a misdirection of that development away from, and even against, God; it is an interruption of that ever-closer fellowship with God which goes with man's growing likeness to God. While the disposition of God is not and cannot be changed, as He is the eternal and infinite Love, yet the relation of God and man as mutual is, and cannot but be affected. If man is distrustful and disobedient towards God, the love of God is and must be restrained in its giving and finding of its life in man. This mutual relation can be restored only by forgiveness on the part of God, as well as penitence and faith on the part of man. Accordingly, in the New Testament, and even the teaching of Jesus, the aspect of the divine Fatherhood which is presented most clearly and fully is His love in forgiving the sinful, restoring them to fellowship with Himself. Coming to the Father on the lips of Christ does not mean, as for many modern thinkers it does mean, the realisation of our personality in its affinity through communion with God, but it does mean God's love

seeking and saving the lost, forgiving sinners, receiving the prodigal son to the heart and home of the Father.

3. The coming to the Father in ever-closer fellowship and ever-growing likeness is a process not completed in this earthly life, but continued in the heavenly, for in the Father's house are many mansions. The hope of immortality is rooted in, and withers if severed from, the faith in God's Fatherhood. Death for Christ was a going to the Father; and with all reverence for His perfect personality, His own desire to depart warrants us in affirming that even for Him death did mean a clearer vision, a closer communion, and a freer and fuller obedience. Limitations of the expression and exercise of His sonship were removed by death. Death for man as for the Son of Man is a condition of the approach to God. The progress in truth, blessedness, holiness, love, which is here begun, is not ended by death, but even enters on a new stage. Jesus' words would suggest even that death is a great advantage to the soul, as the beginning of a new stage of that Fatherward development of man, and a stage which is marked by so great an advance that, for those to whom to live is Christ, death itself is gain. As the divine Fatherhood has subdued sin to its purpose of love, making the experience of forgiveness better even than the sense of innocence, so it has also made death the minister of a greater good.

II.

1. In the relation of God to man the Christian religion asserts and insists on *the mediation of Jesus Christ.* This is not a mistaken tribute of affection, gratitude, and adoration to Him, but a simple acceptance of the claim He makes for Himself. He is the way; it is through Him God is revealed as Father, and man is redeemed as son. The voice of Jesus is echoed by Paul, "Through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18); and by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. x. 19, 20). Without using the same figure of speech the same truth is expressed in the declaration, "There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). It is true that Paul, in challenging the superiority of the law to the promise, because according to Jewish belief "it was ordained through angels in the hand of a Mediator" (Gal. iii. 19), depreciates mediation. "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one" (ver. 20). His argument, however, is directed against the Jewish doctrine of mediation, which inserted a number of angelic mediators between God and man, and so separated God from man. Christ as Son is, however, so one with God that He brings God Himself to us;

and we by faith in His grace become so one with Him that we are brought to God Himself; and thus His mediation is not separation—but union.

2. The modern objection (as by Eucken), however, to this mediation is that one historical personality cannot be for all men in all time so necessary for their life in God. We need not doubt or deny that wherever God is truly sought He is really found by man, that He has never and nowhere left Himself without witness in the reason and conscience of man; and yet we may assert that the relation in which God as Father is known, trusted, loved, and served by man as son has never been realised apart from Christ. Even Calvin admitted that man as creature is so far removed from God that even apart from sin there might have been need of mediation by a God-man bringing together God and man. Still more does man as sinner, not only weak and unworthy, but even distrustful and disobedient towards God, need God's descent in grace before he can begin his ascent in faith. It is only human self-sufficiency which denies the need of the Mediator. Humility and penitence know man's insufficiency of himself to return to God.

3. Just as in man's body there are organs of sensation and organs of movement, and in his brain afferent and efferent nerves, so in his consciousness there is *cognition* and *conation*. While he is active in both, yet in the former he is receptive, in the latter he is initiative. In the one the world impresses

itself on him, in the other he impresses himself on it. The mediation of God by Christ has also a twofold aspect. To man as cognitive He is the truth, to man as conative He is the life. As the way He reveals God to man, and redeems man to God. God seeks to be worshipped in spirit and in *truth* (John iv. 23), for God Himself is *true* (viii. 26). Men who abide in the word of Christ are *truly* His disciples, and they will know the *truth*, and the *truth* will make them free (vers. 31, 32). The man who "doeth the *truth* cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God" (iii. 21). In the Fourth Gospel *truth* means not only *subjective sincerity* and *objective veracity*, it means even *ultimate reality*. Jesus is the Truth not only because He meant to speak truly, and because in fact what He spoke was true, but because in Him man is in immediate contact and intimate communion with what is absolutely and abides eternally real. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." This is the confession of 1 John v. 20. Jesus is truth, because He brings to us in Himself nothing else or less than God Himself.

4. That man may come to God, He must know God as He is. It is not necessary that He should know everything about God. There are secrets of His wisdom and resources of His power, to say

nothing of glories of His perfection, which man has not the capacity to know and understand. What man needs to know is all of God which concerns his relation to God as Father. What Jesus revealed of God was not all that the man of science may want to know, or the philosopher to understand, but the one thing religion craves to be sure of, *i.e.* the relation in which God stands to man, the divine Fatherhood. Here is man's contact with ultimate reality, and it is a real contact. No pragmatist philosophy can be allowed to speak here. We do not believe God is Father, because the belief works for our succour, comfort, and progress. It so works and can so work only as we are sure that our belief is true, that God in His ultimate reality is Father. This certainty Jesus gives us not in word and deed only, but in life itself. He not only speaks and does the truth, He is the Truth. In His sonship, His trust in, love for, and surrender to God, the Fatherhood of God becomes a present reality in the life of man. In His grace to sinners, seeking and saving the lost, the love of God as forgiving sin becomes a present reality for sinful mankind. The certainty about God's Fatherhood and the forgiveness of sin, awakening our confidence, at last communicates itself to us, and the Truth He is becomes the truth which we can hold without doubt or question.

5. In describing Christ as the Truth which becomes our truth, we have already passed to the second aspect of His mediation, for He is not only before us but in

us. He is the Life. This truth, that Christ is not an *external testimony* about God merely, but an *internal influence* of God, runs throughout the Fourth Gospel. He is the Living Bread, of which if any man eat he shall live for ever (vi. 51). He that eateth Him shall live because of Him (ver. 57). He gives life, and gives it abundantly (x. 10). He is the Resurrection and the Life (xi. 25). The First Epistle echoes the teaching of the Gospel, "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (v. 11, 12). The reality of God which as truth He reveals, He as Life realises in us. As He has brought God to man, so He brings man to God. He has revealed God's Fatherhood mainly if not solely, as the forgiveness of sin. His Cross completes His revelation of God's Fatherhood. His Cross commences the realisation of man's sonship through Him as Life. It is the Cross which, showing God's judgment on, in His forgiveness of sin, awakens man's penitence as well as His faith; and that penitence echoes God's judgment as that faith welcomes God's forgiveness. We are active, but He acts in us. We live as He lives in us. Man's personality is not exclusive, but receptive of Him: and it realises itself most freely as He is most really in it. It is a false view of personality which emphasises distinction from and not union with other personalities, which lays stress on the individuality rather than the universality of each man. Still more false is the view of God and

man which would exclude each as personal from the other. Not only is there, but there must be, the dependence of man on God as Creator, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; for human existence depends on divine immanence. But still more in the conscious voluntary relation of man as son to God as Father, man has only as God gives. He thinks truly only as God's truth takes possession of him; he loves fully only as God's love makes his heart its home; he acts rightly only as he wills God's will in himself. And this fulness of God comes to man in Jesus Christ. There may be a genuine Christian experience and a sincere Christian character in which this immediate contact, intimate communion, and indispensable communication with Christ is not prominent in the consciousness, and the man knows himself living rather than Christ in his life. But in the more intense types of piety this constant indwelling and continuous inworking of Christ in the human progress in goodness and grace is ever frankly confessed.

III.

1. There is an exclusiveness in the Christian faith which is found in no other religion. It makes claims for Christ which no other religion makes for its founder. The monopoly of sole Mediatorship it asserts for Him is not an exaggerated compliment which a fond fancy for Him inspires. It is an echo of His voice; and if the claim made for Him is unwarranted,

the blame must fall on Him. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." He is as the true and living way, *the only way*, to the Father. It is a historical fact that religion as a filial relation to God is found only where Christ's revelation of God's Fatherhood is known. No other religion has offered the world the same gospel. This fact is the inspiration of the foreign mission enterprise. If human personality is to fulfil its promise in union with divine personality, if the sinner is to be changed into the son of God, Christ must be known, trusted, and obeyed as Saviour and Lord. If the claim He makes for Himself, which the history of man's religion justifies, that He alone brings men to God as Father be true and not false, it must be the constant purpose and the strenuous effort of all in whom this relation to God has been realised to secure its universal realisation. The path of duty is clear.

2. But the fact that He is the only way raises a difficult problem for thought. What conception are we to form of the religious condition of those who lived before Christ came into the world, or who have never heard of Him?

(i.) The first solution of the problem which has been suggested is that God deals with all men according to the light that they have had, and will reward those who have lived up to their light. But are there any who do live up to their light; and if the light be little better than darkness, can God be content with so imperfect a fulfilment of the promise

of manhood? God can be satisfied only with the highest relation of each of His children with Himself, and that highest relation is realised only in Christ.

(ii.) The second solution is found in what is probably a mistranslation of John i. 9 in the A.V., which speaks of the Word as giving light "to every man that cometh into the world." The Word of God is first of all identified with the historical personality of Christ; and then it is assumed that somehow to all nations is given an equivalent of the revelation and redemption in Christ. But the influence of God in human reason and conscience as found in other religions is not the same as the Christian experience; and by it nowhere have men been brought into the same filial relation to God as Father. And only by using the word Christ instead of the Word of God can even the appearance of equivalence be given.

(iii.) The only solution that can satisfy is that somehow, somewhere, somewhen Christ's grace will be brought within the reach of each man before his eternal destiny is fixed, and he will have the opportunity of coming to the Father by the only true and living way. While this is our hope, our duty is here and now to give to as many as we can this opportunity, and to use it for ourselves to the utmost limit of faith's claim of grace.

IX.

SEEING THE FATHER.

"If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?"—JOHN xiv. 7–9.

THOMAS' confession of ignorance regarding both the destination and the direction of the life of Jesus, which He met by the assurance that He Himself was going to the Father, and that by Him alone men could go to the Father, brought home to Jesus the painful discovery that as the disciples had not understood Him, so they had not known God in Him; and yet He hoped that in the future at least the revelation of God in Him would become a certainty to them. The reference in this assurance of Jesus to the sight of the Father sends the mind of Philip away in a wrong track altogether. Recalling some of the Old Testament theophanies, as to Moses (Ex. xxiv. 9, xxxiii. 18) or Isaiah (Isa. vi.), he asks for a similar vision. Again the helpless and hope-

less literalism of the disciples brings surprise and disappointment to the Master; but in all considerateness and patience He repeats the assurance that, had the disciple understood His life, he would have discovered in it a revelation of God more certain and satisfying than any such theophany could ever be.

I.

1. Jesus is the way to the Father as the Truth and the Life. The *reason* why He may claim to be the Truth is that He as Son is so closely related to, so perfectly represents, the Father that to know Him, as the disciples might be supposed to have known Him, was to know God as Father with the same certainty as sight affords. How He reveals the Father we shall consider when examining more closely the assurance, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Meanwhile we may lay stress on the claim Jesus makes for the certainty of the knowledge of God as Father. What the eyes see, or hands handle, is generally accepted as indubitably real; and the sanity of the man is questioned who will not accept the testimony of his senses. But there is by no means the same general agreement as to the value and the validity of the witness of the spirit. Tennyson has expressed the prevalent agnosticism as regards spiritual reality in his prologue to *In Memoriam*. Faith is supposed to be inferior to knowledge, and knowledge to be confined to objects of sense. But

Jesus claims knowledge of God for Himself, and for others through Him. The New Testament with all its emphasis on faith does not speak as if knowledge were in this sphere unattainable. Paul declares of himself, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12); and of all believers, "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good" (Rom. viii. 28). The Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 1) represents faith as making the invisible as real as the visible, and the future as certain as the present. If we maintain the attitude of the New Testament, we shall not doubt the certainty of the knowledge of God in Christ.

2. To-day, however, with all the discoveries and inventions of physical science, the basis of which is sensible evidence, the nature of religious knowledge has become a problem. It is recognised, and cannot but be recognised by those who have studied the question, that the knowledge of faith is limited and conditioned as the knowledge by sense is not. If a man suffers from no defects of sense, he is positive that reality is as he sees it or handles it. Man's effective control over material reality confirms his confidence in the trustworthiness of his senses. Moral and religious truth, however, cannot claim so general acceptance. It depends on a man's experience and character how he thinks about God and goodness. What for the believer is real, for the unbeliever who

is of perfectly sound body and mind may appear illusion. Is there no escape from doubt or question here? Men have a sense, more or less developed, of moral and spiritual values: ideals exercise an authority over them, aspirations have an attraction for them. There is a moral and religious nature which needs to be suppressed, if sensible evidence is to be regarded as alone valid. If a man develops his moral conscience and his religious consciousness, if he seeks satisfaction for his desire for goodness, his need of God, he will gradually apprehend surely, because he appreciates highly as alone satisfying his whole personality, the moral and spiritual reality which the society to which he belongs holds as its precious inheritance. His desire or necessity does not invent its satisfaction, but, impelled thereby, he recognises the reality of the objects which offer it to him. This precious inheritance of moral and spiritual reality comes to a society in its great moral and religious personalities. Not wholly dependent on, and yet related to, the moral and religious history of the community to which they belong, they begin with more than they inherit, for they by a keener discernment are pioneers in the realm of spirit. By their certainty they inspire confidence until others share their certainty. This description of the process of moral and religious knowledge applies supremely to the relation of the Christian believer to Christ as the Revealer of God. When tested by its results in life, the confidence put in Him gains its verifica-

tion, till in Him God is known as if He were seen.

II.

1. In spite of all the explanations Jesus had given, sufficient to have made misunderstanding appear impossible, yet Philip's *request* proves that for him at least only the knowledge of sense seemed adequate. "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." It was a characteristic of the older revelation that suggested the request, which proved a failure to understand the mode of the new. May we not here recognise an instance of the arresting influence on spiritual development of a religious tradition? In nothing are men more conservative than in religious belief and rite. There is a reason for this with which we must sympathise. In the measure in which an object is precious to us do we desire its permanence. What we give up easily we esteem lightly. To what we hold dear we cling. This consideration should make us patient and tolerant towards religious conservatism. And yet here the good may be the enemy of the best. The kingdom of God has been delayed and hindered by the mistakes of its friends no less than the opposition of its foes. What was good for Moses or for Isaiah seemed good to Philip for Jesus' disciples, while a higher good was within his reach, unwelcomed and unclaimed. Jesus was hampered by the religious past of the Jewish people even within the disciple company.

2. We must be careful of showing due reverence to the religious past. The man who scorns imperfect forms of belief and worship, which he himself has outgrown, and so can judge, does not show a truly progressive spirit. It is probable that he will oppose a like prejudice to fresher forms of faith and duty to which he has not yet advanced. If a man should put away childish things, it is necessary and appropriate that the child should think and feel as a child; and the superseded forms of belief and worship were once legitimate expressions of the religious spirit. We need not doubt or deny the reality of external manifestations which marked the earlier stages of revelation, and we need not deride their value for those to whom they were given, even while we are ready to welcome the new light. For doubtless even to-day new light may come to us, not beyond Christ, but about Christ. We must be on our guard lest a venerable theological formulation of the doctrine of His person should hinder our deeper discernment of what He really is, even as Philip by the memory of ancient theophanies was hindered in seeing God in Him.

III.

1. The *reason* Jesus had given for claiming to be the way to the Father as Truth was so good, that the *request* of Philip deserved and received rebuke. In the words of *reproach* we can discern not only the thoughts, but also the feelings of Jesus, and we shall

often understand His thoughts better if we feel with Him. He is *disappointed.* "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" Nevertheless He is still *confident.* "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And accordingly He is *surprised.* "How sayest thou, Shew us the Father?" Two reasons for Jesus' disappointment may be suggested.

(1) In the first place, Jesus had brought His disciples into immediate contact and intimate communion with Himself. He had made them His intimates and His confidants. He had not concealed His inner life from them, but had made His spirit *absolutely transparent* to them. Doubtless there was a holy of holies of His fellowship with God into which even they were not allowed to enter; but the glory of the God-presence there shone through all reserve and restraint into the holy place of His intimacy and confidence with them, and even streamed into the outer court of His teaching and training. The false man may make his life so skilfully a play-acting that from what appears upon the stage men may not even suspect what is going on behind the scenes. Even the good man has imaginations and impulses which his respect for himself and his regard for others compel him to conceal and repress. The saint shrinks from laying bare his heart in its holiest aspirations, as these are a secret between himself and his God. Jesus had nothing to conceal, and by His very vocation almost everything to reveal. If God dwells within the soul

as He is never fully seen in the life, and if Jesus was the revelation of God, His inner life was no private possession but a universal benefaction, which He did not and could not withhold from those whom it was meant to bless. When we lay aside our natural reserve and give another our full confidence, is there any disappointment keener than that we feel when we discover that we have laid bare our heart in vain? May we not suppose that Jesus felt that disappointment as keenly?

(2) In the second place, the life which He had thus put within the reach of the knowledge and the understanding of His disciples was one of which a total impression could be formed, for it was so *constantly consistent.* The fickle and the wilful man cannot be known and understood, for the impression he gives one day may be taken away the next. The truer and better a man is, with one inspiring motive, one compelling purpose, one definite direction, one fixed destination in his life, the more easy is knowledge and understanding. It was Jesus' meat and drink to do His Father's will: He was straitened till His baptism was accomplished; the love of God constrained Him. If our consistency is doubted, are not we disappointed? So, too, was Jesus.

2. Had Jesus' judgment of Himself depended on the opinion of men regarding Him, His disappointment with His disciples would have shaken His *confidence* in Himself. For how often does a man begin to distrust himself when others show any doubt of

him. But if we read the Gospel record carefully, we shall discover that Jesus' confidence grew as popularity waned and opposition waxed. He meets Philip's request with this assurance that no other theophany than Himself is needed or can suffice—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Self-confidence is not usually regarded as an admirable trait. How can that be as excellence in Jesus which is generally a defect in other men? We must not cut the Gordian knot by at once appealing to His divinity, as His divinity was revealed in perfect humanity.

(1) *First of all*, self-confidence is generally so objectionable because it is unjustified. The fool thinks himself a Solomon, and the dwarf a giant. It rests on ignorance and not knowledge of self. Jesus both knew Himself, and was as He knew Himself. The judgment of the Church has confirmed His self-judgment.

(2) *Secondly*, there is a humility which as unreal, because unrelated to truth, is just as objectionable. A man should be true and just to himself as well as to others; and he should not libel himself in speech, manner, or conduct to others. It is better for a man to under- than to over-estimate himself; but exaggeration in either direction is equally marked by falsity. A man may fail by this false humility to do the work, give the example, or wield the influence for which he is fitted and God intended him. A Solomon, if he could be so foolish, should not think himself a fool. A giant should not try to fill only the space of a

dwarf. The best use of powers depends on the true knowledge of the possession of them. Jesus knew Himself, and must judge Himself as Son of God.

(3) The nature of a man's work, *thirdly*, determines the degree of confidence he must cherish in his fitness for it and call to it. The harder the task a man must face, the greater the trust in his power to accomplish it he must command. No battles would be won by the general doubtful of his strategy. It was Jesus' vocation to reveal God as Father; how could He make men certain of God as Father, unless He was Himself confident that He as Son knew God, and was able to inspire others with this confidence in Himself? The world's certainty of God's Fatherhood waited on His confidence in His own Sonship.

(4) *Lastly*, His relation to God as Son was one of such constant dependence and entire submission as well as intimate communion that His confidence was not so much self-confidence as confidence in God. He was sure of Himself only as He was sure of God. So, too, the Christian, confessing his own insufficiency apart from God, may yet boast his sufficiency in God. When Paul exclaimed, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13), he was not applauding himself, but adoring Christ. So Jesus in His confidence as Son was glorifying His Father.

3. Because of this confidence in God as revealing Himself to and by Him as Son, Jesus feels, and cannot but feel, *surprise* that Philip has not discovered the truth so certain to Himself. Was His

surprise real or feigned? Christian theology did not hesitate formerly in speaking of an *economic ignorance*; Jesus pretended not to know what He did know in order that He might appear as real man. Now this explanation seems intolerable, and we cannot even understand how honest men could ascribe such dishonesty to God. But is Jesus' surprise really a problem? Moral perfection has its limitations; moral failure, defeat, depravity are a surprise to it. Like knows like. He who loved freely, trusted fully, hoped firmly, could not understand the lack of love, faith, hope in the disciples, which hindered their knowledge and understanding of Himself. If His perfection was a barrier to their understanding of Him, their imperfection was a barrier to His understanding of them. By His insight He often knew what they were thinking and feeling; but nevertheless their inner life was often a perplexity to Him. To God surely iniquity remains a mystery. A good man when he witnesses some forms of evil of which he himself would be incapable is forced to cry out, "Oh, how could he do it?" It was no defect in Jesus, but an excellence, that His attitude to God, so different from the attitude of the disciples to Himself, made their attitude a surprise.

4. What has been said about the relation of Jesus to His disciples has its present practical application. Has our Saviour and Lord ground for being surprised at our lack of love, faith, or hope regarding Him? Must He be disappointed with the results of the

work of grace which He has been doing in us? Have we frustrated His constant efforts to reveal God to us, and to redeem us unto God? Does He look in vain in us for the confirmation of His own confidence that He can impart the blessings of God's Fatherhood to us? If we confess such failure, should we not further press the question whether it is because our religion is becoming too traditional, a second-hand influence of the Christian Church, and not a first-hand experience of Christ Himself? Are we hindering our own progress in goodness and in grace by clinging too closely to superseded forms of belief or worship? Do the fetters of the past so bind us in the present as to hold us from the freedom the future would bring to us? But even when we have thus examined ourselves, let us learn to turn away from ourselves. We must escape from ourselves to find our liberty and progress in God. We must direct our attention to, let our interest be absorbed in, and allow ourselves to come under the influence of the revelation and redemption in Christ Jesus our Lord. Only as we gain the certainty of God's Fatherhood in Him can we be so freed from ourselves, and so renewed in Him, that He will not be disappointed with the failure of His work of grace in us, or surprised at our lack of faith in Him, but find His confidence as the saving Son reproduced in our confidence as saved sons of God.

X.

THE FATHER IN THE SON.

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."—JOHN xiv. 10, 11.

THE assurance that the Father is seen in the Son, with which Jesus responded to and also rebuked the request of Philip for a satisfying theophany, needed further explanation and fuller justification; and this is in these verses afforded by a description of the relation of the Father and the Son, the one to the other, as a mutual immanence, the evidence of which can be found alike in the words and in the works of Jesus. If Jesus' self-witness is not enough, let this evidence at least be accepted —*A truth is stated, and a proof is offered.*

I.

1. There are no Christian doctrines about which there has been so much dispute, and regarding which the Christian Church has been more definite and

authoritative in its decisions, than the doctrine of the Godhead and of the person of Christ. The adequacy of the orthodox formulation is now generally challenged; and it is certain that, as popularly understood, the doctrine of the Godhead tends to tritheism, and the doctrine of the person of Christ to a dualism of the two natures which makes the unity of the person an empty abstraction. One of the greatest services which could be rendered to Christian faith to-day would be such a restatement of both doctrines as would preserve the truths the creeds were intended to protect against heresy, and yet would satisfy our modern modes of thought. I have no such ambitious purpose in this sermon; my humbler and yet not invaluable task is to return in thought as nearly as can be to the mind of Christ as Son regarding His relation to God as Father, for this must surely be the starting-point of any attempt at restatement.

2. The relation as stated by Jesus is one of mutual immanence—"I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (xiv. 10). This is not a solitary declaration, but is a recurrent note in the Gospel. "The Father is in me, and I in the Father" (x. 38), simply reverses the order of statement. Are we to interpret this immanence metaphysically, or morally and spiritually? The creeds have done the former; the representation in this Gospel bids us do the latter. For Jesus asserts that the relation of His disciples to Himself should also be a mutual immanence—"Abide in me, and I in you" (xv. 4). But the ideal to be

realised by them is the reality revealed in Him. He perfectly abides in God, and God in Him: the imperfection of the disciples' abiding in Him necessarily limits the perfection of His abiding in them. We may also in illustration recall the characteristic phrase of Paul "in Christ." It is such a mutual immanence, moral and spiritual, which he confesses —"I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). Yet what was a duty enjoined on the disciples, what was a gain of Paul's faith in the grace of Christ, was for Christ Himself in relation to the Father an original, essential, inalienable possession. We may maintain, therefore, that the unique mutual immanence here asserted, if we think out all that it involves, leads us into the region of metaphysics for an adequate explanation.

3. We may think of this mutual immanence then as first of all *an intimate personal communion.* "I speak the things which I have seen with *my* Father; and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father" (John viii. 38). A resemblance between the relation of Himself to God, and of the enemies to the devil, is indicated; is a difference, a greater intimacy intended to be suggested by the reference to the sense of sight in the one case and of hearing in the other? Again we read, "The Son can do nothing of himself; but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner" (v. 19). Resemblance to God results from intimacy with God.

The same thought is implied in the declaration, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work" (ver. 17). It is such an intimate communion that is indicated in the sole Synoptic parallel to this Johannine teaching, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son." An exclusive relation is claimed, and yet its extension by the Son's mediation is offered; "and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27; cf. Luke x. 22). Knowledge may be external and superficial, the subject knowing may not be drawn closely to the object known; but when the knowledge is of person by person, it is not only mutual, but the response of object and subject to one another develops an immediacy of apprehension unattainable in any other sphere of knowing. So intimate a communion of husband and wife is described in Browning's lines:

> "When, if I think but deep enough,
> You are wont to answer, prompt as rhyme;
> And you, too, find without rebuff
> Response your soul seeks many a time
> Piercing its fine flesh stuff."
>
> "By the Fireside."

We shall not greatly err if we use as an analogy of the relation of Father and Son the most sacred human relationship we know.

4. The Son was in the Father because the mind, heart, and will of God was the home of all His thinking, feeling, willing; the atmosphere of His inner life, in which He lived, and moved, and had

His being, was the presence of God. His oneness with God was the accord of His mind with God's, the absorption of His heart in God's, the assent of His will to God's. He always and altogether lived as God lives. The Father was in the Son even as the Son was in the Father. While God is omnipresent, yet there are degrees of His immanence. While He fills the Universe with His presence, yet that presence in what is most distinctive of His perfection as God is manifested in varying measure to, in, and through His creatures. As there is more of God's manifestation in organic than in inorganic existence, in consciousness than in the unconscious, in truth than in thought generally, in love than in other emotions, in holiness than in action morally less worthy, so He was supremely in Jesus and Jesus alone. God not only approved all that Jesus was, said, and did, but appropriated into His own life the character, experience, and service of Jesus. Just as perfectly as Jesus identified Himself with God, did God identify Himself with Jesus, so that there was one common love, one common life, and one common lot. The human history of Jesus was truly and fully the manifestation and communication of God Himself.

5. An intimate personal communion may exist where there is more or less nearly personal equality, not any inferiority or superiority on the one side or the other. But in the relation of Christ and God as presented in the Fourth Gospel there is not equality. The saying, "The Father is greater than I"

(xiv. 28), is not an *obiter dictum*, but a basal idea in Jesus' own consciousness as Son in His relation to God as Father. The very terms Father and Son assert a difference of function in the unity of the relation. Paul protects his monotheism by clearly teaching the subordination of the Son to the Father, and he has warrant for so doing even in the Johannine representation of the filial consciousness of Jesus, in which there was a complete dependence and an entire submission—"The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." If Jesus said of His disciples, "Apart from me ye can do nothing" (xv. 5), He no less says of Himself, "I can of myself do nothing" (v. 30). In spirit and in deed alike He gives to men only as He gets from God: "the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world" (viii. 26). "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things" (ver. 28). As God's missionary both His message and His method is from God. His dependence is not enforced, but voluntary. The dependence is so complete, because the submission is so entire. "I seek not mine own will," He could sincerely confess, "but the will of him that sent me" (v. 30). In this submission He finds His satisfaction. To use a modern phrase, His self-realisation lies in His self-surrender—"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work" (iv. 34). His obedience is the warrant of faith in Him—"If

I do not the works of my Father, believe me not" (x. 37). The strain and stress of Gethsemane was just this, that for a time He desired that it might be possible for the cup of God's will in His death to pass; and yet as soon as it became clear what God's will was, there was submission—"Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39).

6. There are two reasons why this Johannine representation of the Sonship of Jesus should be emphasised. (*a*) *First of all*, it makes more intelligible and credible the Incarnation. Dependence and submission are characteristic of man's relation to God; and their perfection, if not found in ordinary men, is quite consistent with ideal humanity. As Son, dependent and obedient, God might without contradiction be conceived as becoming man. If the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus is to be preserved for modern thought, it must be represented as in the Fourth Gospel. (*b*) *Secondly*, this representation shows the affinity of the relation of Jesus to God and the relation of men to God which He mediates by His truth and grace. Even in His Sonship He is our example; for while that Sonship was unique, as both original and perfect, yet it resembles ours in being *an intimate personal communion, a constant dependence*, and *an entire submission*. While Christian theology has magnified the differences, it has ignored the resemblances between Christ's Sonship and ours. And yet in so doing it has opposed itself to the distinctive feature of the revelation of God in Christ,

God is Father because the relation, which is eternal reality in the Son through the incarnation of the Son, is being temporally realised in a multitude of sons being brought to this glory (Heb. ii. 10).

II.

1. The proof offered of the truth stated is twofold. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" (ver. 11). What Jesus Himself desires is that He Himself should be trusted in His self-witness; but, failing this response to His appeal, He is willing that faith in Him should begin in belief on the evidence of His miracles. The second kind of proof seemed more cogent to His contemporaries; the first is the more effective for men to-day. The certainty of His religious consciousness of His Sonship, the perfection of the moral character consistent with this Sonship, the efficacy of His mediatorial function in bringing men into fellowship with God such as His own, and of renewing men in His own likeness—these personal characteristics make the more potent appeal to reason, conscience, and spirit to-day. As we study the Gospels we must be convinced that as He is there presented He is worthy of our confidence. He is too sane and balanced in intelligence to be self-deceived; He is too good and upright in character to deceive. We must, accepting the Gospel record as substantially correct, either depreciate His in-

telligence, or discredit His character, if we refuse His testimony regarding Himself. Could Philip, who had been His companion for three years, so distrust Him? Can we with all the testimony Christian experience bears to His truth and grace so distrust Him as to doubt or question His witness about Himself?

2. Why Jesus preferred this trust in Himself to belief in His miracles is evident. The former not only brought the disciples into more intimate and adequate personal relation with Himself, but also had a more distinctively moral and religious value. He who thus comes to His light shows that "He doeth the truth," that His works "have been wrought in God" (iii. 21). To appreciate the goodness of Jesus shows, if not the possession of a like goodness already, yet an attraction and aspiration toward it. To apprehend His teaching shows a desire and a capacity for the truth. The man who recognises the worth of Jesus therein shows his own worthiness; —his judgment of Jesus is his test of himself. Such an approach to Jesus, therefore, is congruous with the purpose for which Jesus seeks to have any relation with men; and so the course of the Christian life can be continuous with its beginning. The personal faith in Jesus needs development, but not to be changed in its essential character. As Christianity is a personal relation to Christ Himself, it is desirable, because congruous, that it should begin with this personal trust in Him; and it has been a mistake

and a loss that too often in the appeal for faith the emphasis has fallen elsewhere.

3. Nevertheless Jesus does not altogether reject the second kind of proof. Yet it is noteworthy that while in ver. 10 there is the singular πιστεύεις, in this verse there is the plural πιστεύετε. While it is possible that Westcott's obvious explanation of the change is right, "Philip had expressed the thoughts of his fellow disciples, and now the Lord addresses all" (*in loco*); it is also possible that an appeal originally addressed to His Jewish opponents has been drawn by association of ideas into this conversation with His disciples; for in x. 37, 38 the same challenge is made to the Jews: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." For is it likely that at the close of His ministry Jesus would have placed His disciples on the same low plane as the unbelieving Jews, by addressing the same kind of argument to them? Surely they knew enough of Jesus, and loved Him enough, to trust Him and His witness regarding Himself. But even if this appeal is out of its proper place here, yet it is significant that Jesus did assent to such a beginning of relation to Himself, when the truer and better way was barred whether by prejudice or unbelief. But it must be insisted that belief in Him as divine because of His divine works was regarded by Him as insufficient, as tolerable

only as a first step. For it was this kind of belief that Nicodemus offered and Jesus refused as showing that the necessary spiritual change for understanding or entering into the kingdom of God had not yet taken place. Nicodemus' confession, "No man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him," is met by the demand, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (iii. 3). This kind of belief, too, in the people at Jerusalem He regarded as inadequate for discipleship. He did not trust Himself to those who believed in His name when they beheld the signs which He did (ii. 23, 24). While rating so low the belief in Himself which rested on His miracles, He nevertheless severely rebuked the unbelief which rejected even this evidence (Matt. xi. 20–24). The faith Jesus desired must possess the same moral and spiritual quality as the revelation of God which was given in His Sonship. So often has the Christian Church forgotten that it is only these moral and spiritual values which count, whether in God's revelation of Himself or in man's responsive relation to God. To us to-day His emphasis should be welcome. The evidence of miracle now challenges denial rather than commands confidence. But the world is more sensitive and responsive at present than ever to the argument which is addressed not to intellectual acumen, but to moral insight and spiritual discernment; Christ in us by faith and God in Christ in His grace join our earth to God's heaven.

XI.

THE GREATER WORKS OF BELIEVERS.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."—JOHN xiv. 12.

JESUS appealed to His words and works as evidence of the mutual immanence of the Father and the Son. These works, proving His unique relation to God, however, He goes on at once to assure His disciples, were not to cease with His earthly life. Because of the relation of the disciples to Himself His ministry would be continued in them. And not this alone, but even more; because His relation to God would by His departure from the earthly life assume a phase of closer intimacy and greater immediacy, freed from limitations which on earth had belonged to it, greater works would be done by His disciples than He had been able Himself to accomplish. Because of the *connection* of His disciples with Himself there would be in them a *continuation* of His work; and even because of the *change* in His relation to His Father there would be a *contrast* between His own works and theirs.

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I.

1. It is significant that in this statement Jesus uses the third person singular of general reference and not the second person plural of particular address to His disciples. It is doubtless His disciples whom He has in view in the promise He gives of still greater works; but He does not limit the promise to them. His statement excludes the assumption that it was to be in virtue of any office conferred on them that His disciples were to do the greater works; and asserts the condition of personal relation to Himself through faith, without which they would be impotent. This consideration demands emphasis: for in the Christian Church office has been unduly exalted, and many unwarranted claims made for it; and faith as alone enabling any man to carry on the work of Christ has been too much disregarded, and its necessity ignored. Whenever and wherever office is exalted above faith, His presence will be concealed and His power unexercised. But as soon as, and in any place in which, faith again lays hold on His truth and grace, spiritual vitality and moral vigour are renewed.

2. Jesus' demand of faith here meets the objection to Paul's teaching which is sometimes made, that he gave to faith the place it holds in Christian life, and that Jesus laid stress on duty. And accordingly a disparaging comparison is made between the Epistle to the Romans and the Sermon on the Mount. Such a view is due to a very superficial study of the

Gospels, for Jesus no less than Paul puts faith in the forefront. But we must be careful in appealing to Jesus in support of Paul, to give to faith the full meaning it had for both. It is most unfortunate that while we translate the substantive πίστις by *faith*, we must translate the verb πιστεύω by *believe*, as the word belief has now a narrower meaning than faith. It is not merely intellectual assent Jesus demands, but personal confidence and consequent submission: faith is trust and surrender as well as belief in the narrower sense of the word. Jesus' own commentary on this demand of faith is contained in the analogy of the Vine and the Branches (xv. 1–10). Thus the connection between the believer and Christ is similar to the connection between the Son and the Father. There is a mutual immanence; the believer makes Christ his abode by faith, and Christ makes the believer His abode in grace. The disciple can do nothing apart from Christ: it is only as in Christ that he can bear any fruit at all. And the bond of union with Christ is the faith which, surrendering all to Him, claims all from Him.

II.

1. The Incarnation of God is *continued* in the Christian Church; not in its sacramental rites or sacerdotal orders, but in the witness, worship, and work of the whole company of believers, the one flock of Christ found now in many folds. Jesus

chose and called, taught and trained His disciples that they might carry on His work in the world. His revelation of God and His redemption of man are perpetuated and diffused by the Church. As Paul taught, it is His body, one with and one in Him, and as His body it is also His πλήρωμα (Eph. i. 23). It is usually assumed that the Church is so called as filled with His presence, power, riches, agency; but the word may also mean complement, and so the meaning may be that Christ in His work in the world is completed in His Church, just as the soul is completed in the body as the organ of its expression and activity. He speaks through the Church's preaching, works through the Church's influence and service. As because of the mutual immanence of Son and Father His words and works were God's, so in the measure of the mutual immanence of Christ and His Church its witness and labours are His.

2. There seems little doubt that when Jesus appealed to the testimony of His works as supporting His self-evidence, He was thinking of His *miracles*, not exclusively as supernatural acts, possibly even not primarily as such, but as manifestations of the power as well as the goodness of God. The disciples were promised *power* (δύναμις) when the Spirit came upon them (Acts i. 8), and the word here means probably not strength generally, but capacity to perform miracles. Peter claimed the abnormal phenomena of Pentecost as evidences that the

promise of the Holy Spirit had been fulfilled consequent on Christ's exaltation (ii. 33). Not only does the record in Acts assign acts of healing and even restoration to life to the apostles similar to those performed by Jesus Himself, but Paul testifies that in Corinth the presence and power of the Spirit were manifested in miracles, gifts of healings, speaking with tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy (1 Cor. xii. 29, 30). Even if it should appear on closer scrutiny that some of these manifestations were abnormal psychical phenomena, similar to those found elsewhere at a time of religious revival, yet there does remain evidence for the continuance of the supernatural power of Christ in the Church during the Apostolic Age. The cessation of that power in subsequent periods has often been lamented, and its renewal has been desired and attempted, and while it is possible, as some writers even to-day maintain, that, if the Church exercised a more confident and courageous faith in Christ, its extreme necessities as in foreign mission work would be met by even such a manifestation of the sovereignty of Christ over nature as well as in man; yet on the whole it does seem more probable that these manifestations were granted in the earliest period of the Church's history as signs to the world until the history of the Church itself, and of Christ's truth and grace therein, could supply a more adequate and effective witness. Jesus Himself assigned an inferior position to the evidence of His works than to His own self-

witness, and regarded the belief which rested on such evidence as inadequate and unsatisfactory, and as tolerable only as a first step towards the faith in Himself He desired. And Paul, though admitting the Spirit's agency in these gifts, yet points to a still more excellent way, "the way of love" (1 Cor. xii. 31). Accordingly we are warranted in assuming that Jesus did not intend or expect His work to be continued only, or even mainly, in miracles; but that it is His work which is being carried on in the preaching of the gospel with its manifold effects in enlightened minds, cleansed consciences, and renewed lives, in the education of the young in goodness and godliness whether at home or in school, in the manifold forms of philanthropy to relieve want, comfort sorrow, remedy wrong, and restore health and happiness to men, in the influence which can be exerted on the State, and through the State by legislation and administration on Society generally.

III.

We must understand the works of Christ in this wider sense, if we are to find in Christian history the fulfilment of His promise of greater works; for the miracles of Christ have not been excelled in the subsequent centuries. But with this broader view we can prove real the contrast between the works of Jesus and believers.

1. *First of all*, the works of Jesus were locally

limited. While His sympathy was not restricted, as His treatment of the Samaritans and Gentiles with whom He came into contact shows, His effort was concentrated on "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And for this there were two reasons. Aware that His service would soon be consummated in His sacrifice, it was needful for Him, "while it was still day," to offer Himself in word and deed as fully and freely as He could to the people to whom He had come in fulfilment of God's promise, and who must get the best opportunity possible for accepting Him before judgment could fall upon it for His rejection. God's purpose in Israel in mercy and judgment alike demanded this limited but intensified effort. The second reason lay in the character of the Jewish nation. Its moral and religious exclusiveness required that the effort of Jesus, if it were to be won at all, must be directed to it alone. Any ministry to the Gentiles would have bolted and barred the door of Jesus' opportunity of influencing in any way the Jews. His Church, however, has not been so confined in the scope of its service. Where its interest or effort has been limited, it has been by its own failure to recognise the breadth of its opportunity, or to rise to the height of its obligation. To-day the gospel can be spread to the ends of the earth and the kingdom be made to embrace all nations. He who in His earthly life could be but the Jewish Messiah can now become the World's Saviour.

2. *Secondly*, as has already been suggested, there

was a temporal limitation in the ministry of Jesus; for swiftly fell the night of His Cross, when His works could be no longer done. The Apostolic Church, unconscious surely of the largeness of its task, worked also with a sense of temporal limitation, for it expected the Second Advent within the first generation. The history of the Christian Church has shown that God's purpose is fulfilled slowly; and centuries have been granted, where Christ had but at most three years. To-day we shall do the work not less earnestly and eagerly, but more thoroughly, if we learn from the past to expect that God will not bring human history to any premature conclusion, but will allow time for the full results of the labours of the Church.

3. *Thirdly*, there was the personal limitation in that Jesus in the days of His flesh could not teach or do more than His own powers allowed; but now the Christian Church can command the services of a great multitude. If all believers were also workers, which, alas! they are not, how vast would the resources of the Church be in consecrated service of God and man! In the measure in which salvation is regarded as requiring service, will the Church's capacity increase.

4. *Fourthly*, there was in the ministry of Jesus a limitation in His environment. He reached and used Galilæan peasants, and most wonderful and unlooked for were the results that through His Spirit they could and did accomplish. But the leaders and the teachers of the nation were opposed

to Him. These things were at first revealed to "the babes," readier ever to respond to new influences than others would be; but "the wise and prudent" in their conceit and pride were irresponsive. But we must not on that account hold that the Christian Church must never seek to reach and use those who can influence society by their knowledge or capacity. It was Saul, the learned Jewish scribe, who, when converted, became the most potent instrument of Christ as Paul the Apostle. Christianity can command resources of human knowledge, talent, position, wealth such as it could never use before, and all these can be purified and consecrated in Christ's service. It may be that a persecuted Church has been a pure Church, and a tolerated Church a corrupt. But it does not follow that the Church which has the Spirit of Christ will not do greater works in a world responsive to its efforts than in a world hostile to it. Christian ideas and ideals, in spite of a temporary set-back such as we are now witnessing in this deplorable war, are increasingly pervading human culture and society; and we can to-day recognise opportunities and resources abundant for the greater works which Jesus promised believers in Him.

IV.

1. Because the Church can do greater works than Christ Himself did, is it greater than He? Assuredly not. Not only is faith in Him, dependence on, and

submission to Him, the condition of doing these works, but the works are greater, because He now is Himself able to do through His body, the Church, what He could not do in His own body on earth. It is because He has gone to the Father, and is with the Father in heaven as well as with His Church on earth, that the greater works are done. The return of Jesus to the Father had as its consequence for the relation of Jesus to His work on earth an escape from the temporal, local, and historical conditions which had set limits to His earthly ministry. He now became to His Church the universal and permanent presence, and the supreme authority in earth and heaven (Matt. xxviii. 18–20). He not only lived, but reigned.

2. While it may seem rash to try, as it were, to pierce the clouds which hid Him from His disciples in His ascension, and to follow Him into the heavenly places, yet the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes the venture. For him the efficacy of Christ's priesthood in contrast with the failure of the Levitical priesthood lies in His ever living to make intercession for us, so that He is able to save us to the uttermost in our approach to God (vii. 25). We must confess that such conceptions as priesthood and intercession are but the earthly shadows which hide as well as point to the heavenly substance of the gain and good to mankind of the presence of the incarnate Word with the Eternal Father. We must not press the figure lest we suggest an unwillingness in God to save to the uttermost, some obstacle in the Father to be

overcome by the Son's importunity—an intolerable idea! What we may venture to suggest is that the Church in its work on earth in seeking to save the lost has the certainty that sacrificial and redemptive love is constant and supreme in the heart of the eternal and infinite God. Earth's endeavour has Heaven's approval and support. In the midst of the throne there is the Lamb as it had been slain, and He alone can open and unseal the book of the purposes of God in judgment or in mercy (Rev. v.). The authority in heaven which He claims is the pledge that through His Church His authority will also be established on earth.

3. That authority on earth is the sovereignty of His sacrificial, redemptive love in the thought and life of all mankind. Divine omnipotence does not, and from its very nature cannot, impose it; human faith must accept it. The Church as the agent of that purpose can accomplish it only as He Himself dwells and works in it. Accordingly the presence of Christ with believers, and the realisation of that presence by believers, is essential if the greater works are to be accomplished. The Church to-day is inclined to despondency regarding the progress of the kingdom of God on earth. Its resources seem inadequate, and its results disappointing. What is needed is the assurance that the greater works do not depend on its independent human endeavours, but on the power of Christ Himself working in it. He cannot falter or fail, and in Him the Church cannot suffer any defeat.

What is also needed is the warning that His power is not, and cannot be, exercised in and through a Church which does not fully put itself at His disposal by faith. It is faith the Church, in so far as it is failing, lacks; it is only as it gains in faith that it can do the greater works. What unites the eternal reality of God and the temporal realisation of the kingdom of God is divine grace and human faith. The divine grace is measureless, unfailing; it is the human faith that does not always fully claim and use this grace. According to faith are the greater works of the Church.

XII.

THE POWER OF PRAYER IN CHRIST'S NAME.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do."—JOHN xiv. 13, 14.

THE connection between Himself and His disciples, which Jesus affirmed as the necessary condition of greater works being done by them than had been done by Himself, was faith. But how was this faith to be exercised so as to be effectual to this end? Prayer is faith's speech and deed, for it joins man's weakness to God's strength. The greater works of the disciples would and could be wrought only by His answer to prayer offered in His name; and that answer was assured, because by it the purpose of God begun in Him would be completed through them. We have in the words of Jesus the *condition* of acceptable prayer stated, the *certainty* of His answer assured, and the *consequence* of His answer to prayer in God's glory indicated.

I.

1. The prayer which is assured of an answer is the prayer offered in *the name of Christ.* Whether addressed to Christ Himself or to the Father this condition is essential, as other passages show. The use of the name of Jesus includes, as xv. 16 suggests, the relation to Himself of discipleship, and a discipleship which, through abiding in Him, is and remains fruitful in good works. The Christian experience of fellowship with Him and the Christian character of likeness to Him are presupposed in the use of His name. The use of the name of Jesus in prayer was not habitual in the earthly ministry of Jesus. Only after the Resurrection did His mediation with God become characteristic of Christian devotion (xvi. 24). That prayer must be offered in His name does not mean, however, that His intercession is necessary to persuade God to be gracious. The superstitious use of the name of Jesus as a talisman to secure an answer is rebuked in the assurance of the Father's love for all who love Him (vers. 26, 27). He does not deny the fact of His intercession, as presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews and Rom. viii. 34; but He is anxious to emphasise the love of the Father, which does not need to be importuned by Him on behalf of His disciples in order to get the answer to prayer offered in His name. The use of the name here again, it is suggested, implies discipleship: love for, and belief in, Christ as sent of God—a belief which in itself con-

veys the assurance that the sender is loving, as is the sent. In Hebrew usage the name of God is the revelation of God; and so the name of Christ means the revelation of God in Christ, and the use of the name, acceptance of, and allegiance to that revelation, or, in other words, a sincere and an effective discipleship. Belief in, fellowship with, love for, and service of Christ—that is discipleship; and prayer is only in His name as it is the expression and the exercise of the faith of a disciple.

2. This thought may be expanded in more direct application to the kind of petitions which the use of the name will allow or forbid.

(1) *First of all,* this prayer must be the approach and appeal of the earthly children to their heavenly Father; it must be in penitence and faith, humility and confidence, desire for God's blessing, but submission to His will. It must be childlike, but not childish; a self-committal, thankful and trustful to the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and not a self-assertion in wilful wishes and petty pleas.

(2) *Secondly,* it must be in accord with the purpose of God as revealed in Christ towards His children. That will is not their physical benefit, secular advantage, selfish gains or worldly goods, but their forgiveness, deliverance, holiness, blessedness, eternal life. As this is God's chief concern, it should also be His children's. What they should care so much for as to make it the burden of their prayers is their growth in the truth and grace of Christ; what they should seek

first in prayer as well as word and deed is the kingdom of God and His righteousness in their own growth towards perfection like the Father's.

(3) *Thirdly*, as the purpose of God in Christ is the universal good, prayer in the name of Christ can never be selfishly confined to individual interests, be they even moral and religious. The spread of the gospel throughout all the earth, the growth of the kingdom of God in human society, the victory of truth, love, holiness over falsehood, hate, and sin, for these must the disciple pray, if he would pray in Christ's name, in accord with His revelation of God.

(4) *Fourthly*, the Christian does pray in the name of Christ for the relief of sorrow, deliverance from danger, help in need for himself and his dear ones. Is he mistaken in so doing? Does the use of the name of Christ exclude such petitions? Assuredly not, if these circumstances hinder our devotion and service, and if a change of them would free us for fuller and better work for God in the world. Assuredly not also, if we offer our petitions in entire submissiveness to God's will, with a readiness to welcome even the continuance of these adverse conditions, should the wisdom and goodness of God so appoint. Assuredly not, even if these two conditions are only imperfectly fulfilled, so long as it is in a humble and confident intimacy with God that we desire Him to know all our wants and wishes, to present ourselves unreservedly before Him even as we are.

II.

1. When prayer is offered in His name, whatsoever is asked, Christ will do. If the condition is fulfilled, the certainty of an answer is assured. It is worth noting that in this verse Jesus speaks of prayer as addressed to and as answered by Himself. In other passages He speaks of prayer as presented to and fulfilled by the Father. If prayer be addressed to Jesus, it must be addressed not to a human companion and helper, but to the divine Saviour and Lord; and not to Him as taking the place of God the Father, but as the way to God the Father. He hears and He answers prayer mediatorially as the Revealer of God to us, and as Advocate with the Father. Prayer addressed to Jesus as human, distinct from God, is likely to lack confidence of a certain answer, as it assumes less than the infinite and eternal resources of God as in Him. It is only as we ever think of Him as in God and God in Him that there can be the certainty that our prayer to Him will be answered. Hence it will affect the tone of our prayer whether, even when we address prayer to Christ, we do not exclude God from Him, but include God in Him. There is prayer sometimes offered even by Christian men that errs in the opposite direction. God is addressed as though He had never revealed Himself in Christ. The thought of God betrayed in such prayer is less and lower than the truth as it is in Jesus. Such prayer will also lack confidence; there will be awanting the certainty of an

answer, which Christ's personal assurance alone can give. We must think of Christ as God incarnate, as bringing to us in human form divine reality; and thus the tenderness, sweetness, and gentleness which attract will assure us also of a love wise and strong as the eternal and perfect God. We must think of God as revealed in Christ, and then the majesty and exaltation of God will not overwhelm us, but God will stoop to our low estate in the self-emptying of His grace in Jesus Christ. Whether we address the Son or the Father in prayer may seem a matter of indifference; but it does make a difference in the quality of prayer if we think of Jesus apart from God, or of God apart from Jesus in our approach or our appeal.

2. Must the certainty of an answer to prayer to Christ depend on His word alone, or can we offer any reasons for it? The believer has in his own experience the witness that the word of Christ is true, and could rest on that alone, if needful, even if there were much in his life to challenge his trust. But this confidence may and should seek such confirmation as it can find.

(1) *First of all*, we know that Christ by His Spirit in us commands a direct and potent influence over our inner life in enlightening our minds, quickening our hearts, and renewing our wills. If we submit ourselves to His influence, He will fulfil His purpose in us, and will satisfy our aspirations for the perfecting of the work of grace which He has begun in us. That Christ can bring about moral and spiritual changes in

us, and that the prayer of faith is the occasion of His work of grace in us, is an assured fact of the Christian experience.

(2) *Secondly*, we are constrained by our human love to pray for the moral and spiritual good of others; that Christ can influence them as He influences us, we can assume. But must there not be a receptivity in them for His influence, such as we by our prayer offer when we pray for ourselves? If they are not praying for themselves, but are even, as we may know to our sorrow, defiant and disobedient, can our prayers take the place of theirs as the occasion of His work of grace in them? It is certain that God cannot exercise His omnipotence in making any man good against his own will, and our prayers cannot compel those for whom we pray to yield to God's Spirit. God's purpose may be hindered, thwarted, defeated by persistent sin and unbelief. Nevertheless our prayers for others are not in vain. If the loved one for whom we pray knows of our intercession, the constraint of our love will be upon him to soften the hardness of his heart. Even if he does not, our intercession is not valueless. For to judge from the practice of Christ in His healing ministry, human faith is a condition of the release, as it were, of the divine grace; and that faith may be exercised on behalf of others as well as ourselves. God in His dealing with us recognises and respects our freedom; and prayer is that act of freedom by which man assents to God's work in himself. Men are so closely related to one another that they can

act for one another even in this respect. Moreover, prayer is the putting forth of our spiritual force, even as is the direct influence which we can exert over others; and by our prayer the force which we cannot exercise in direct influence is taken up into the immediate influence which God by His grace exerts over human souls. Even if we cannot completely exhibit the *rationale* of intercession, we do well to yield to the impulse to pray for others which grows stronger as our love to God and man grows; and such an impulse does not mock.

(3) *Thirdly*, when we are constrained to pray for relief from suffering, deliverance from danger, or supply of our wants, can we be as confident that God will so direct the order of nature as to meet our wishes? It is not unbelief to admit that here we cannot have the same confidence that our prayers will be answered *in the letter* as when we seek spiritual blessing; for, while we can be sure that God wills our salvation, we cannot be so sure that He wills our ease, comfort, pleasure, health. It may be His purpose to make us, even as the Author of our Salvation, perfect through sufferings (Heb. ii. 10). But our prayers will be answered in the way Paul's was, by the assurance of the sufficiency of Christ's grace to enable us to endure (2 Cor. xii. 9). While in all our prayers for earthly goods we must cheerfully accept this limitation of our desires by God's will for us, we should ignore Jesus' teaching if we abandoned the belief in an individual providence of God exercised in and through the universal order of nature

(Matt. vi. 25–34). We do not destroy the order of our bodies by the voluntary control we wield over their activities; and so God, of whose wisdom the laws of nature are the expression, and of whose power the forces of nature are the exercise, is according to these laws and through these forces making us individually the objects of His care and bounty. Our prayers may be the occasion of His doing for us, and bestowing on us, what should otherwise be withheld, because He recognises and respects our freedom, and freely responds to our free approach in prayer. If we always so think of God's relation to nature as a constant and universal immanence, a free expression and exercise of His wisdom, power, and goodness, we shall not desire or expect miracles to be wrought on our behalf, and find answers to prayer only in the extraordinary and inexplicable; but shall gratefully recognise God's response in the regular order of nature. On the other hand, however, we shall not affirm that miracles are impossible to God, and that He cannot help us even by miracle if His love so wills. We leave to Him to dispose, and do not in our prayers propose to Him how He shall answer us.

(4) *Lastly*, not only is the order of nature under God's control, but even the course of history also. As we look back upon the past we can discern a human progress, which reveals the fulfilment of a divine purpose. In spite of the challenge which the events of our own time may offer to the kingdom of God on earth, we cannot cease praying for its coming in

fulness of blessing. Failures, disappointments, delays there will be in work for the kingdom; but none of these should shake our confidence in prayer that God in Christ will answer. In times past the darkest hour of one stage in the advance of the kingdom came just before the dawn of another stage. And even to-day, as we look out upon a world in which so many Christian nations are engaged in deadly conflict, we may and must pray with the certainty of an answer that this war may end the period of preparation for and provocation of war, and there may come, and speedily, an age of abiding peace.

III.

1. The *condition* of the prayer of which the answer is certain is that it be offered in the name of Christ; and the *consequence* is that the Father will be glorified in the Son. No selfish wish or worldly aim may be sought, and none will be fulfilled in Christian prayer. The glory of the Father in the Son was the constant and dominant purpose of Christ Himself. Of Lazarus' illness He declares: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (xi. 4). This result, too, He foresaw in His sacrifice: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him" (xiii. 31). Man realises and satisfies himself only as he surrenders himself to and finds himself again in God. The consequence of the answer of prayer in

the name of Christ is accordingly for man the highest good attainable. In so praying man not only gains what he asks for, but a blessing comes far beyond the measure of His asking. For the glorifying of the Father in the Son is no selfish advantage, and no worldly honour to God; but it is the fulfilment of His purpose of love, the progress of His Kingdom of grace, the salvation of individual souls, the transformation of human society, the victory over sin, and evil, and death, the establishment of truth, holiness, blessedness upon earth. It is a universal good for God and man alike.

2. How does this consequence follow from answered prayers? God's glory is His manifested perfection, the glory of the Father in the Son is the manifestation of God's grace in Christ, and man's response thereto in adoration, gratitude, devotion, service. In the blessings which come in answer to prayer God manifests His grace and evokes man's response. When a man calls out, "Now thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" he glorifies God in Christ. Further, the answers to prayer inspire a holy boldness in man's approach to the throne of grace; ever asking more and ever receiving more, the believer ever praises more. As grace abounds, so does gratitude; and in both God is glorified. Again, when the unbeliever observes the life of the believer so enriched in the answers to his prayers, his desire for like spiritual blessing is awakened, his confidence in prayer is strengthened. He prays; his prayer is answered;

and he too praises God. Thus as prayer spreads from man to man, grace more abounds in each and all; and the name of God in Christ is exalted above every other name; the Father is glorified in the Son. Accordingly, not for our own good, or for the good of loved ones alone, should we pray, but, with all reverence be it said, for God's sake as well; for prayer is as the opening of the door between earth and heaven, so that the perfection of the eternal and infinite God may enter in, to manifest itself to, by reproducing itself in man, till God's glory fill the earth as well as the heavens.

XIII.

THE PROOF OF LOVE.

"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."—JOHN xiv. 15.

THE condition of acceptable and effectual prayer is stated in the preceding verses (13, 14): it must be offered in "the name of Jesus"—a phrase which means that what is asked must be according to the purpose and within the range of the revelation of God in Him. How can a disciple be assured, however, that he is himself in such perfect accord of spirit with the Master that all his prayers are offered in His name? A confident faith may be presumptuous; the religious value of faith must be tested by its moral quality. The faith which is truly and fully Christian energises in love (Gal. v. 6); this is its sign, proof, test, aim. Loving obedience is the ultimate condition of acceptable and effectual prayer. As the Revised Version properly, in contrast to the Authorised Version, renders the words of Jesus: the obedience is a *consequence* of, and not a *command* for, love. A proper understanding of the character of love for Jesus shows the inevitable connection between love

and obedience; and this obedience is not restraint or compulsion, because of the character of the commandments of Christ, which are all comprehended in love. If we consider on the one hand *the character of love* for Christ, and on the other *the character of the commandments of Christ*, we shall be convinced that obedience is not only a consequence, but *the one inevitable consequence of love*, even as it is *the necessary condition of acceptable and effectual prayer.*

I.

1. How often is love for Christ spoken of in sermons; and yet how seldom is the endeavour made to make quite clear the meaning of the words! Yet the attempt is worth making. Even in a theological treatment of the subject the error has been made of regarding love as the ideal for feeling, as truth is for thought, and holiness for will. But the true view is rather this, that blessedness is the ideal for feeling, and that love is the expression and exercise of the whole personality in relation to another personality. It is the whole self, thinking, feeling, willing, which gives itself, and in giving finds itself in another self. Love involves an estimate of, an emotion towards, and an effort on behalf of another; love values, finds satisfaction in, and renders service to another. This analysis of love may be applied to love for Christ.

(1) There is an *estimate of the worth of Christ.* The quality and the intensity of the love will depend

on the adequacy of the estimate of Christ. Doctrine is necessary to devotion as well as to duty. If Christ be thought of as a wise teacher, a good example, a helpful and comforting companion, there will be love for Him, and no love is to be despised. But can it be as deep and strong a love as when He is thought of as the Son of Man, the perfect man, the vicarious man, the ideal and universal man, as the Son of God, the Word become flesh, the Image of the invisible God, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, as the Saviour of men, in His words and works, life and death, giving Himself to mankind to save and bless, as the Lord of all claiming as His own all whom He has redeemed from sin and reconciled unto God? Such an estimate in our love for Christ will forbid all familiarity and irreverence; it will inspire humility and adoration. For it will recognise the distance between Him and all who love Him, and the condescension of His love towards them. Perfect love does cast out the fear that hath torment, but not the awe of the soul before the Truest, the Holiest, the most Blessed. Intimacy of communion there will be as love grows; but such intimacy, the closer it becomes, will the more humble us and exalt Him, as we come to know Him as He is, and to know that He also knows us even as we are.

(2) There is an *emotion of satisfaction in Christ.* As we apprehend the truth about Christ, we shall find more and more our blessedness in Him. The man for whom Christ has the value just described

must say, "Now none but Christ can satisfy. None other name for me." Such descriptions of Himself as Jesus gives—the Bread from Heaven, the Water of Life, the Light of the World—all express not only how fully all man's needs of soul are met in Him, but also how keen and sure is the sense that they have been met. There are many Christians who fear emotion in religious life. Why, however, should men not be ashamed of enthusiasm in business or pleasure, and have a distaste for it in religion? Jesus does not rebuke, but commends, the passionate devotion of a Mary, even when it bursts the bounds of conventional expression; and the cold propriety of so much of our devotion must be a grief to Him, who loves intensely, and seeks intensely to be loved.

We must avoid all artificial stimulants of religious emotion. But there is a natural stimulation by concentrated meditation on His truth and grace, by frequent recall of what He has been to us, and done for us in our religious experience, by intense aspiration for "a closer walk" with Him. Emotion duly controlled and rightly directed is a potent force in the religious life, and probably we have far too little of it, and are even too successful in the suppression of what we might have.

(3) Opinion which wakens no sentiment is powerless, and feeling which does not end in action is wasted. The cultivation of religious emotion without the development of Christian character is injurious to the soul. For a man feels himself good and godly

when he is not, and, unconscious of his need, he does not strive to become what he ought to be. Emotion is good only as the motive of action. The satisfaction in Christ which does not issue in the service of Christ is a subtly dangerous form of self-indulgence. We are entitled to find our blessedness in Him only as we seek our holiness through Him. If we truly love Him, submission to Him will be inevitable. His love will constrain us to reckon ourselves not as our own, but as only and always His. Thus obedience is the proof and the test of love, for it is its necessary completion, its inevitable expression, its spontaneous exercise. Obedience is not a remote consequence of love, but so much the immediate fulfilment of love, that it is nothing but love itself at its best. And yet for the sake of emphasis we may look at this part along with the whole. If the consideration of love thus yields the conviction that obedience is its consequence, the consideration of the character of the commands of Christ will only confirm it.

II.

1. While Jesus here speaks of His commandments, we must not forget that He did not give His disciples an extensive and elaborate code of rules; but as He simplified, unified, and harmonised all the requirements of the ancient law in absolute love for God and equal love for self and neighbour, so the duty of the disciple is summed up in the new commandment:

"A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (xiii. 34). "This is my commandment, that ye love one another" (xv. 12). Paul was certainly interpreting aright the mind of the Master when he insisted that the more excellent way of using and enjoying all spiritual gifts was the way of love (1 Cor. xii. 31). This Christian love, which is the fulfilment of Christ's commandments, will, in regard to others, reproduce the characteristics of the love for Christ which is its motive, and also its pattern. There will be *an estimate of the worth of every man* according to the judgment of Christ. He taught the infinite worth of the individual soul to God in the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son. And Christian love can despise or despair of none. There will be *an emotion of compassion* (the reverse of satisfaction) for those who in sin are squandering their worth, and *an emotion of satisfaction* with those who are restored to God. The joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth is shared on earth where Christ's commands are obeyed in love. There will be *an effort of recovery of the lost*, and of help and comfort for the saved. The good of others will both be desired and striven after, and all lesser claims of others will not be neglected, but best discharged, if there be such a Christlike love to all men.

2. This representation of love as the fulfilment of all law, the keeping of all the commandments of Christ, may be confirmed by a wider ethical considera-

tion. It is now recognised by moralists generally that morality as law represents a lower stage of development than morality as the fulfilment of an end—the realisation of a good. A code of laws is *atomic*, each precept stands by itself; the multitude of duties enjoined cannot be remembered, still less discharged; cases will arise for which no rule gives guidance; one requirement may come into conflict with another, and a higher principle is lacking to reconcile the difference; commandments may be kept in the letter and not the spirit, and thus the observance may defeat the intention of the law. If, however, for a code there is substituted an end or a good, at once morality can become a unity, *organic*, capable of development and adaptable to new demands and fresh conditions, and so inexhaustible in its suggestiveness and permanent in its authority. The concrete instances of general principles given by Jesus were locally and temporally conditioned, and a literal observance is not only impracticable, but would even often defeat the purpose for which they were given. To ask, What would Jesus do? is a hazardous proceeding, and imagination would often usurp the function of conscience in answering it. But to set all His counsels in relation to His ideal of absolute love to God and equal love to self and neighbour is to secure unerring guidance.

III.

1. If there be then so close a correspondence between the commandment and the motive of the obedience,

the commandment will come not as a compulsion from without, but as a constraint from within. Accordingly love as the fulfilment of Christ's commandments may be regarded as *the inevitable consequence of love for Christ.* This relation offers us in morality a proof and a test of religion. If a man finds it difficult to be loving to others, he has great reason to doubt whether he has love for Christ of the proper quality and the adequate intensity. If he wants to become more loving, he cannot force the sentiment by resolution. If he recalls Christ's estimate of the worth of those whom he would love better, and if he resolves to render all the service he can to them, doubtless the element of feeling in love will in due time emerge alongside of the other elements of thought and will. But a quicker and surer way of winning more love for men is to come into closer relationship to Jesus Christ. Our grateful love for His generous love will issue in a generous love towards others (1 John v. 1, 2). In Christianity, accordingly, morality depends on religion; the Christian's duty is done to his fellow-men from the motive and in the measure of his devotion to Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

2. This obedience in loving is therefore the test, because it is the proof, of love to Christ. How often have other tests been proposed! Orthodoxy has been regarded as of primary importance; men have talked of a "saving knowledge," and have found it in creeds and catechisms. The demand for a particular kind of experience has sometimes been made. Evidence of

conversion is required, not in the present Christian character, but in the recollection of a religious and moral crisis in the past. Again, intensity of emotion, abundance of sentiment, is made the test of the saving relation to Christ. But natural temperament largely determines the amount and force of feeling, and that may be increased or depressed by many circumstances of no distinctive moral or religious value; and so the test of feeling by itself is deceptive.

3. Character is the test of the reality of the relation to Jesus Christ. It is not only here that He sets this test: "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. vii. 16.) What makes the application of the test difficult is the fact which must be frankly admitted, that there are many men and women who make no Christian profession, desire no Christian experience, it may be even deny the Christian creed, whose lives show more real obedience to the commands of Christ than the lives of those who are orthodox and pious professors of Christianity according to the traditional, conventional standards. Let us not deny the worth of the first class: Christian heredity and environment may result in Christian character even where there is not the Christian confession. And may we not believe that Christ's influence in honest and serious souls is wider in scope than their own knowledge? Let us not excuse the defect of the second class. Jesus' saying to His disciples has been too much ignored. "Except your righteousness shall

exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (v. 20). Christians are expected and can be enabled to be saints such as only divine grace can make. If so many Christians lack the marks of saintship, it is not because that obedience is not the proper test of love to Christ, but because the love is not pure, deep, and strong enough to produce it as an inevitable consequence.

IV.

1. The love for Christ which is completed in the keeping of His commandments must now in closing be shown to be *the necessary condition of acceptable and effective prayer.* It will be conceded that in prayer we cannot bend God's will to our wishes, but must bend our wishes to God's will. What contradicts His character, defeats His purpose, and dishonours His name God will not and cannot grant, however vehement or persistent the petition may be; for that would be to deny Himself. It may be needful for God by disappointment of our hopes and denial of our wishes, even when brought to Him in prayer, to discipline and even chastise us for our good, that we may learn what desires and purposes His perfection forbids, and what aspirations and resolves His perfection allows. When it is said, as it sometimes is, that all prayer is answered, the statement is ambiguous. It may mean that we get whatever we ask. In that sense the statement is not true. Paul asked that the

stake in his flesh might be removed, and it was not (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9). Even Jesus prayed that the cup might pass, if it were possible; the cup did not pass, but He learned that it could not (Matt. xxvi. 39–42). What is usually meant, however, is that if our prayer is sincere and earnest, we shall learn what we ought not to ask, and shall even find help to do without. So Paul found sufficiency of grace, and Jesus gained strength to take the cup in surrender to the Father's will. What we should desire, however, is that we may be brought into a relation of such harmony with the mind, heart, and will of God that we shall ask always and only what God can and will give us even as we ask, because our wishes, hopes, and aims reproduce His truth and grace.

2. Is not just this harmony assured in the love for Christ completed in the keeping of His commandments? Love has an insight which can be attained in no other way. Love does not need to ask what service will be acceptable to the beloved, or to tell the beloved what service is needed. The loving divine and anticipate one another's wishes. Very trying indeed would be the relation of husband and wife, if each had always to ask what service was needed, or to tell what service would be acceptable. The more real and intense the love, the keener and quicker the discernment of the loved one's will. So surely is it in the relation of the believer to the Saviour and the Lord. So close becomes the intimacy, so complete the understanding, that the believer has

the mind of Christ, and can be certain of His will. A love which fell short of obedience would in so far be incomplete, and so lacking in the unerring discernment of perfect love. How great a gain for the life of prayer would be such insight as would enable us to offer our petitions, not merely with the proviso that they were offered in so far as they were according to God's will, but even with the assurance that they were, and could not but be, because the speech of love perfected in obedience.

XIV.

THE PROMISE OF THE OTHER PARACLETE.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you."—JOHN xiv. 16, 17.

THE connection of thought between the promise of the other Paraclete given in these verses, and the demand for loving obedience made in the preceding verse is not obvious; but it seems to have been this. Even if the disciples did not themselves feel it so, Jesus knew that the demand of loving obedience was not an easy one. On the one hand there was the danger that, His visible presence withdrawn, their love to Him might grow cold; for it is not always true that "absence makes the heart grow fonder." On the other hand, exposed to temptation, beset with difficulty, and burdened with cares and fears, obedience might become a grievous yoke even for such love as they might have. How could they, untaught and unhelped, be sufficient for these things? In His loving and wise foresight Jesus anticipated their need of a higher

succour and strength; in His tender care for them He besought on their behalf the divine defence and succour which they needed. It is to meet this practical necessity that the next stage in the divine revelation is disclosed. In His promise of the New Paraclete, Jesus reveals *the cause of the Spirit's coming*, *the character of the Spirit's working*, and *the condition of the Spirit's continuance*, and suggests *the connection of the Spirit with Himself*.

I.

1. Why did Pentecost follow the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus? On the side of the disciples the inward condition for the gift resulted from the renewed faith in Jesus, consequent on the evidence that He had not perished in death, but lived and reigned. On the side of Jesus, as His words disclose, the gift was an answer to His prayer. Accordingly Pentecost is an instance of the efficacy of His prayer, and so an encouragement to the disciples to pray in His name. Were we to consider only the experience of the disciples, we might make out quite a plausible case for a merely natural development. We might say that it was only when the despair which the death of Jesus had brought to them had been removed by His appearances to them, when the certainty that He was risen from the dead took full possession of them, that this increase of spiritual enthusiasm and energy resulted, and could result.

There is truth in this psychological explanation of the subjective conditions of the new experience; but it is not the whole truth. If it was a natural development, it was stimulated, sustained, and completed by the supernatural act of God. It was God's will that His revelation in His Son should be continued in His revelation in His Spirit; and yet the fulfilment of that will, as Jesus' words here show, waited on His intercession on behalf of His disciples: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (παράκλητος)."

2. These words of Jesus regarding *the cause of the Spirit's coming* suggest two truths which claim fuller treatment.

(1) We are prone to put into antagonism to one another in the religious life natural human development and supernatural divine activity. The tendency of Christian thought till recently was to ignore man's action, and to emphasise God's; the tendency in the few years since the psychology of religion has attracted so much attention has been to lay all the stress on what man does, and to make little of God's working. The assumption of contradiction between the two points of view is quite unwarranted. Man is and must be active in religion: God is and must be active in revelation; and in the mutual relation of God and man there is no conflict, but consistency between the two activities. Man is active in receiving, and God is active in communicating. Man's action in conversion blends in unity with God's action in regeneration.

Man's spiritual development, however natural it may from the human side appear to us to be, is harmonious with the agency of the Spirit of God as supernatural. In all answered prayer may we not recognise the partnership of God and man?

(2) We are prone also to think of God as fulfilling His will by His omnipotence, regardless of man's wishes. But the words of Jesus teach us that even He, the Incarnate Son, had to make request of the Father in order that the next stage of the divine revelation might be begun. Probably as we read these words what we think of first of all, if not alone, is what they disclose about His interest in, and solicitude about, His disciples. But His words also reveal His relation to the Father as we should not have dared to think of it. If God's dealings with Him waited on His faith, is it at all surprising that for us faith should ever be the condition of blessing? But the disciples were not aware of their need, knew not how it could be met, could not themselves exercise the faith which would bring the gift of God. Accordingly Jesus prays on their behalf. How helpful and encouraging in our Christian life is this twofold truth, that we are not left alone in that life in the weakness of man, but that the Spirit of God brings us the strength of God; and that even when we are not seeking that gift, He who lives to intercede for us gains it on our behalf.

II.

1. What is the gift which Jesus gains on our behalf? There is a twofold description here given. He is the Paraclete, a word quite inadequately rendered by *Comforter*, and He is the Spirit of truth. The first describes the purpose and the second the method of the Spirit's working. The word παράκλητος means literally *summoned, called to one's side.* Hence it is used for *one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defence, legal assistant, advocate*, and more generally, *one who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor.* In 1 John ii. 1 the term is used of Jesus Christ, and should be rendered *Intercessor* rather than *Advocate.* In the widest sense it means *a helper, aider, assistant.* It was in view of His own departure that Jesus prayed for this other Companion; and we may, therefore, assume that the Spirit was to be to the disciples all that Jesus had been to them—Teacher, Friend, Helper, light for their minds, love for their hearts, life for their souls. All that they needed and had found in Christ, and would miss after their separation from Him, would be given back to them in the gift Jesus had won by prayer.

2. Yet while the Spirit was to be their Paraclete, He was to be *another* Paraclete than Jesus had been. What was the difference? Jesus had been with them in visible form and audible voice, an objective revelation of the truth and grace of God. The other

Paraclete was to be Spirit abiding with them, and being in them, unseen and unheard, yet known and welcomed, a subjective communication of the light, love, and life of God. God is outwardly revealed in Jesus Christ, the historical personality; He is inwardly communicated in the Holy Spirit, the experienced influence of God. The Holy Spirit as God is personal even as God is; but He is not historical personality as Christ was. Just because the Spirit is God dwelling and working within our personality, enlightening the mind, enriching the heart, enabling the will, the very source and sustenance of our inmost life, we cannot distinguish Him from ourselves and separate Him from ourselves. For God in His Spirit is God in His most immediate contact and intimate relation with man. When we perceive God in objective revelation, we may speak of fellowship with Christ; when we possess God in subjective communication, we may speak of the Spirit's indwelling and inworking.

3. The Spirit as Paraclete is here described as the Spirit of truth, and in ver. 26 as the Holy Spirit. Yet it is in ver. 26, where the epithet "Spirit of truth" is not found, that the epithet is itself explained. "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." The Spirit is not a secret, mysterious agency working in man beneath his consciousness, apart from his intelligence and his conscience, moral and religious changes which are inexplicable. He is the Spirit of truth. It is the

objective revelation in Christ, the reality of God as truth in the widest sense for the intelligence as well as the conscience, that is the channel of the Spirit's activity. He so presents the truth of God as it is in Jesus Christ that the mind receives it, and the heart responds to it, and the will submits itself. The other Companion keeps the first Companion real for the believer, makes more intelligible and authoritative and satisfying all that He was, said, did, and suffered; and accordingly is not a substitute for Him, but rather under the new conditions the continuation of Him, so that Christ returns again to His disciples, and they receive Him again in the Spirit.

III.

1. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ during His earthly life was necessarily temporary; its conditions forbade its permanence. As every body is perishable, so the visible presence and the audible Voice of even the Word Incarnate could not abide; for Him it was needful to work while it was called day, for even for Him the night would come when He could no longer work (John ix. 4). Necessary and inevitable for man's apprehension as was this historical manifestation under conditions of time and sense, it was limited. That the truth and grace of God so revealed might become universally and permanently available for all men in all times, another mode of revelation was necessary. The Spirit

because in the disciples, could be with them for ever. This truth of the Spirit's continuance is one which is ignored in common thought. As there are no visible, audible signs of the Spirit's presence, to many it seems that when they have no inward witness of His working, He is no more in the world. How often do men fervently pray for another Pentecost! The reality of the Spirit need not be again bestowed on the Christian Church, for the gift has never been withdrawn. All the enthusiasm and energy of Pentecost is, as far as God's giving is concerned, always and everywhere available. Even Christian men fail consciously to realise the presence and power of the Spirit because they are not fulfilling the conditions of this inward witness, receiving because knowing Him. The condition is indicated in the contrast made between the world and the disciples.

2. The world in John's Gospel is not the physical universe, but human society, and human society in its disregard of its dependence on God, and in its defiance of the authority of God over it. What in Paul's thought the flesh is individually, that in John's thought the world is collectively, the creature estranged from and in rebellion against the Creator. And just as Paul describes the Gentile world as exchanging the truth of God for a lie, as incapable of truly conceiving and therefore rightly worshipping God (Rom. i. 25), so John describes the world as incapable of receiving the Spirit of truth because unable to perceive Him. We are reminded of the

sayings of Jesus, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and again, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3, 5). Continuance in sin destroys the capacity, both mental and volitional, for the spiritual life. Jesus too emphasises the mysteriousness of the Spirit's operation for the unspiritual. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (iii. 8). The world's incapacity is, however, not absolute. Only as long as it remains estranged and disobedient does the spiritual insensibility and impotence continue. Whenever there are penitence and faith, the new birth is possible, and the capacity for seeing and entering the kingdom is possessed.

3. In contrast to the world, the disciples had the capacity: "Ye know him." It was as yet but very imperfectly developed in them, as they had often disappointed Jesus' expectations of their spiritual discernment. And, as the subsequent history of the early Church showed, they were not very quick to follow the Spirit's teaching in regard to the place of the Gentiles in the Church. But still the teaching of Jesus had increased their intelligence, stimulated their conscience, and so given them a spiritual discernment which apart from Him they could never have reached. It was by coming to Him, learning of Him, following Him, sharing His yoke, that these

Galilæan fishermen and peasants had been so transformed as to be made capable of becoming the channels of the divine revelation through the Spirit. It is not keenness of intellect, not wealth of learning, not fineness of scholarship, not variety of culture, although these have an immeasurable value as servants of the Spirit, which qualify for the spiritual life. Those may all be possessed, and this be lacking. It is the humble and the contrite heart, the teachable and obedient spirit, the choice and habit of discipleship toward Jesus Christ which open the soul to the fulness of the Spirit of God.

IV.

1. There is at the present moment in the religious world a revival of mysticism. The theological liberalism which was an inevitable reaction against ecclesiastical orthodoxy has largely spent its force, as all revolt which is not reconstruction must; and many are seeking a less exhaustible source, and a more satisfying sustenance for their religious life. Assuming without making adequate inquiry that the Christian Churches have not learned anything, and so cannot offer any fresh guidance or assistance in the things of the soul, that historical Christianity is held fast in the fetters of the ecclesiastical orthodoxy which they regard as having been finally disposed of by the theological liberalism which they have hitherto favoured, they are turning to mysticism

and theosophy. They think that the light of India is brighter than the Star of Bethlehem. There is a genuine desire for spiritual life even in this quest. In the Christian Church also there are many who are not content with the acceptance of a plan of salvation, or theory of the atonement, which a traditional evangelicalism seems alone to offer, although it does aim at much more; and so they welcome the teaching about the Spirit which is identified with Keswick especially. Whether the leaders of the Keswick movement intend it or not, the common impression is that the life in the Spirit is something additional to and in advance of the life of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

2. Not in opposition to these two tendencies, but rather in correction of them, is it necessary to insist on *the connection of the gift of the Spirit with faith in Christ.*

(1) As regards the first tendency, history teaches that the mysticism which detaches itself from or opposes itself to the historical mediation by Christ of the reality of God tends to pantheism, the aspiration to be absorbed in, identified with the divine, an obliteration of personality both in God and man. There is a mystical, or I should, to avoid misleading associations, rather say, a spiritual aspect of Christianity. Nay, rather the Christian life is completed only in the life in the Spirit, the most immediate contact and intimate communion of God and man without the confusion of God as personal with man's

personality. But this life follows on, and ever needs faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour and the Lord. He remains the Mediator, however closely together God and man are brought in Him.

(2) As regards the second tendency, it must be insisted that the life in the Spirit is not a higher privilege reserved for an elect few; but that wherever faith in Christ is of the true quality and in the proper measure, it will secure inevitably the presence and the power of the Spirit of God; for discipleship, genuine and intense, so makes the disciple one with the Master as crucified and risen with Him, dead to sin and alive to God, that the human personality becomes the purified and prepared habitation of God by His Spirit.

XV.

LIFE IN THE LIVING LORD.

"I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."—JOHN xiv. 18–21.

WITH the keen insight and quick fellow-feeling which love gave to Him in His relation to His disciples Jesus seems at once to have detected that His promise of Another Companion and Helper (vers. 16, 17) was not a comfort but a grief to His devoted followers. They wanted Himself and no other. Recognising how helpless and hopeless would be their *condition* without Him, He assures them of His own *continuance* with them, for the Spirit is not to be a compensation to them for His absence from them, or a substitute for His presence with them. They would, unlike the world, have the *experience* of His presence; and the *evidence* to them of His presence would be the life which they would enjoy in Him the Living One. The *explanation* of the possibility of such

an experience He offered to them was His relation to God; but the *condition* of its actuality He required from them was their obedient love for Him.

I.

1. Jesus had addressed His disciples as "little children" (xiii. 33), expressing not only His tender solicitude for them, but also their weakness and helplessness without Him. Although He had been for three years teaching and training these grown men, yet in the things of the kingdom of God they were but babes (Matt. xi. 25). They still needed His guidance and guardianship, His care and His keeping. If the withdrawal of His visible presence had meant also His separation from them so that His counsel and help could be no longer theirs, they indeed would have been in the condition of *orphans* (cf. Jas. i. 27). The continuance of His own presence with them even in the Other Companion and Helper Jesus recognised as a necessity for them, not only for their affection and devotion to Him, but even for their fitness and fruitfulness as His witnesses and workers. Translating the historical fact into a theological truth, we may affirm that while we can distinguish two stages in God's revelation,—the stage of the manifestation in the historical reality of the Incarnate Son, and the stage of the communication in the personal experience of the indwelling and inworking Spirit,—yet these two stages are so related to one another that the one does not cease when the other begins; but the

second takes up and carries on the content of the first. The Son and the Father in Him are present and active in the Spirit.

2. For this continuity two reasons can be given.

(1) On the one hand the attachment of the disciples to Jesus was so intimate, intense, and satisfying that it was far too valuable a moral and spiritual treasure to be cast aside. The memory of Him, however reverent, grateful, and devoted, could not mean to them or do as much for them as an unbroken fellowship of love with Him. For Christian experience generally it is the historical Jesus as presented in the Gospels in His truth and grace who makes the potent appeal to the soul, and evokes its penitence and faith; and the indwelling and inworking of the Holy Spirit would not apart from Him so command the conscience and capture the heart. Must we not confess that, did we not believe that the living Christ now with us was one and the same with the historical Jesus, our conception would be too vague to be effective in evoking affection and obedience? Take away the historical Jesus from Christian faith, and believers will very soon begin to feel themselves spiritually orphans.

(2) On the other hand the subjective experience needs the support of the objective history. In the Christian religion the facts of history are necessary for the faith of the soul. So essential is the historical manifestation of God in Christ to the distinctively Christian type of thought and life, that the individual communication by God's Spirit is not, and cannot be,

a sequel to it, but must be its continued application, giving it permanence and universality.

3. It is this continuity in the two stages of revelation, Jesus Christ the same yesterday in the days of His flesh, and to-day in His presence by His Spirit, which is the condition of the apprehension of the second stage. The only approach to the distinctively Christian experience of the Spirit's indwelling and inworking is by way of faith in the historical Jesus confessed as the Christ. Because the world had not attained this confession, because it knew not Jesus as the disciples knew Him, for it at His death on the Cross He ceased to be. For sense alone the suffering, dying Form upon the Cross was the last sight of Him. For the disciples, however, the companionship of the earthly life, because of their acceptance of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, was the preparation for a spiritual communion. The reference here is not, it is probable, to the appearances after the Resurrection, real as we may hold these manifestations to have been, and necessary to restore to full vitality and vigour the faith of the disciples lowered and weakened by the disappointment of all their hopes in the Crucifixion, but to their inner experience of His truth and grace in His Spirit.

II.

1. The *evidence of the Christian life* for the continued presence of Christ may claim our closer scrutiny. The words in which this truth is ex-

pressed, "Because I live, ye shall live also," at first sight appear like a promise of immortality pledged by His Resurrection; and they recall the assurance to Martha regarding her brother Lazarus (xi. 25, 26). It is true, most graciously and blessedly true, that the victory of Christ over death is the security all believers have in bereavement and in dying that death is a conquered foe, and is now Christ's ministering messenger. But the next verse shows that Jesus is undoubtedly referring to the spiritual and moral experience of the disciples in their earthly life. Between the two truths, however, there is a very close connection. The present life in Christ in the intimate indissoluble relation to God it brings, and in the character in growing conformity to the divine perfection it makes, offers the guarantee of continuance through death into a still closer fellowship with, and a still greater likeness to, God in Christ. A promise of mere immortality would be worthless, if it were unaccompanied by an assurance that the continued life would be a life worth having, and so worth wishing for and striving after; and that the religious and moral quality of the life can certainly offer.

2. In the Christian life we may distinguish the religious experience and the moral character, in each of which the presence of Christ with His truth and grace is manifested.

(1) The certainty of God's fatherhood in spite of the challenge which human history and the lot of the believer often offer, the assurance of

pardon despite the accusing conscience and the evil consequences of the sin committed for self and others, the possession of peace of heart, amid trials, sorrows, and losses, the confidence of the sufficiency of grace for every need, the expectation of deliverance from death, and the heavenly inheritance—all these elements in the religious experience are not only related to the historical reality of the teaching and work of Jesus, but are received as gifts from the living Saviour and Lord. It is not belief in the truth of the testimony of the Scriptures about Christ, although that is involved, which saves, still less is it acceptance of any plan of salvation or theory of the atonement, but Christ Himself apprehended by faith as real, present, gracious, and mighty. What the Christian experiences daily of comfort, help, relief, proves to him that he is not being affected by a past history merely, but that He is now in contact with a present reality. There may be more or less of vivid realisation of Christ's presence such as Paul had, and such as most of the eminent saints have had, but in all genuine Christian experience there is the consciousness that these gifts which so minister to life are always coming not from a dead, but a living Hand.

(2) This religious experience, however, is individual, and to a large extent incommunicable. As it has no sensible evidence for others, it may be dismissed by unbelief as subjective, and a psychological explanation may be attempted, which sets aside the

alleged objective cause. But there is a proof which makes a stronger appeal. It is the moral character which results from the religious experience. Here, too, unbelief may attempt its psychological explanation, but there is an objectivity about the Christian character which exposes to the impartial mind the inadequacy of any such explanation. When a man is thoroughly changed in purpose, habit, disposition, and when he himself ascribes the change to the faith which apprehended and appropriated the reality of Christ's truth and grace, when an improving moral character keeps up the correspondence with an increasing religious experience of Christ as Saviour and Lord, it is folly to deny the explanation that the subject of this experience and this character offers, and to propose some other solution of the problem.

III.

This religious experience and this moral character, distinctive of the Christian life because of Christ's Presence, involves a doctrine about Christ's person as *the explanation* of it. Jesus Himself draws this necessary inference. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." His presence in every believer involves His universal immanence, and that universal immanence is explicable only by His personal immanence in the Father, who is omnipresent, in all, through all, and over all.

(1) In the days of His flesh Jesus did not share in that divine omnipresence, as He did not exercise divine omniscience or omnipotence. He was localised in a body; and His presence was confined by that body. His healing at a distance (John iv. 50) is not an instance to the contrary, as it may be explained by His faith in the omnipresent God exercising His power in response to the prayer of faith. This limitation He expected would be removed at the Resurrection, for even in Matthew's Gospel He promises the universal presence (xxviii. 18-20).

While the appearances of Christ after the Resurrection indicate that He had a "spiritual body" different from the "natural body," but capable of sensible manifestation, yet it would be hazardous in the extreme for us to speculate as to the possibility of that spiritual body becoming a universal presence. Christ's own words direct us to turn rather to His relation to the Father as the explanation of the mutual immanence of Himself and all believers in Him. He is in us and we in Him, because He is in the Father.

(2) The mutual immanence of the Living Lord and the disciples who live in Him involves that He in some sense shares the omnipresence of God. It is sometimes argued that when we speak of the fellowship with the living Christ we can mean nothing else and no more than the universal presence of God, the God once revealed to us, it is true, in the life and the teaching of Jesus Christ, but who is now with us

without His mediation. That explanation, however, is not consistent with Christ's promise, nor with the fulfilment of which a multitude of believers rejoice in being the witnesses. The mediation of the Father by the Son, who became and is man in Jesus Christ, continues for the Christian experience. The historical reality of the revelation of God's truth and grace in Him is so inseparably joined to the eternal reality of God for Christian faith, that wherever God is, there He is in Christ, and not apart from Him. For Christ the withdrawal of His visible presence from the disciples was a gain, for He was going to the Father who is greater than He (xiv. 28). For the disciples He too regarded it as a gain, for without His withdrawal the Spirit could not be imparted (xvi. 7). We are not overbold in trying to discover the meaning of such statements, and finding it in such a relation of the Risen Lord to the Father as gave Him a fuller participation than the condition of Incarnation had allowed in the distinctively divine attributes.

(3) The words of Jesus also suggest that the difference between the earthly and heavenly conditions of His presence with His disciples would lead them in due time to infer from their experience of life in the Living Lord, His relation to God as immanent in God, and so to a higher conception of His person than they had hitherto attained. When we turn to the New Testament we do find a distinct progress in the apprehension of the truth about the person

from what may not be unjustly described as the rudimentary Christology of the early speeches in Acts to the advanced Christology of the Captivity Epistles or the Fourth Gospel itself. But this is not a merely speculative development; it is a necessary interpretation of the distinctively Christian experience of the presence and the power of Christ, and of God as Father in Him as Son.

IV.

1. In this presence of Christ in His disciples, it is His love which is imparted, and in His love the love of God as Father; and all the evidences of that presence in the Christian life are gifts of the love of God. Even in human love, in spite of the barriers of body, there is a mutual immanence of the loving hearts; in a very true sense each can give life to, and find life in the other. In this giving of love by Christ to His disciples there are no such limitations; and His relation can be as intimate and immediate as, for it is indeed identical with, the relation of the God in whom we live and move and have our being. Of God's immanence as Creator and Preserver we are not conscious, and it does not depend on our volition. We cannot banish Him from ourselves, or ourselves from Him. But God's immanence as love in Christ is not only a conscious, but even a voluntary relation. We can exclude God in this revelation and redemption from ourselves. Of the presence of Christ, and of God in Him, there is a condition which we must fulfil.

It is only in the man who by obedience to His commands has given proof of the reality of his love for Him, to whom Christ gives the assurance of His love and the Father's love in Him. In a previous sermon we have already considered the nature of love for Christ and the relation of obedience to love as its inevitable consequence—nay, even as its necessary consummation; now we have to face the question whether man can fulfil the condition of Christ's presence without that presence.

2. If Christ's presence with us depends on our obedient love for Him, how can we fulfil that condition? for it is only by His presence that there can be evoked in us the faith which energises in this obedient love (Gal. v. 6). This is not a speculative subtlety but a practical difficulty which is worth removing. Before there is any conscious and voluntary relation of discipleship, and the fellowship with the living Lord to which discipleship grows, there is in man as made in God's likeness and for God's fellowship some measure of receptivity for, and responsiveness to, the divine truth and grace as presented in the gospel. At the beginning of the Christian life there is not, and cannot be, that realisation of the presence of, and communion with, Christ which comes with the growth of that life. But the reality of Christ as Saviour and Lord can be sufficiently apprehended through belief in the witness of the gospel for the trust in and surrender to Him in which the Christian life begins. It is Christ

Himself who by His truth and grace so develops that initial trust and surrender that it becomes increasingly the obedient love, which is the condition of an ever-fuller and firmer experience of the presence of Christ, and of God in Him. Without Him we can do nothing, not even take the first step to faith in Him; but when we have taken that first step we shall realise the conscious and voluntary relation to Him in fuller measure, and the reality of His presence will grow from less to more.

XVI.

CHRIST'S ORIGINALITY, AUTHORITY, AND JUDGMENT.

"Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me."—JOHN xiv. 22–24.

THE disciples often misunderstood Jesus; but so intimate was their intercourse with Him that, when they were perplexed, they did not hesitate to interrupt His speech to put their questions, doubts, or difficulties before Him. This is the fourth interruption of the farewell talk. First came Peter's question, "Lord, whither goest thou?" (xiii. 36). Next followed Thomas' confession of ignorance regarding the way (xiv. 5). Then Philip asks for the sight of the Father (ver. 8). Lastly, Judas (not Iscariot) cannot understand how Jesus can conceal Himself from the world while revealing Himself to His disciples. His perplexity shows the *contrast*

between Jesus' purpose of spiritual presence and influence and the disciples' plans and hopes of a public display and disclosure of the Messiahship. Jesus answers the question simply by a *confirmation* of the truth which He had already taught, that loving obedience is the condition of communion with God in Him; and adds thereto a *censure* of all who, failing to fulfil the condition, reject the revelation in Him of God as Father.

I.

1. One of the most striking and convincing evidences of Christ's independence of the world around Him, and dependence on God alone, is this, that His method of fulfilling His vocation so contradicted the popular expectation, and even the prophetic predictions, which dominated even His family and His disciples. "His brethren did not believe on him" (John vii. 5). The tragedy of the family was not altogether repeated in the circle of disciples; for they did believe in Him, but nevertheless still clung to the vain hope of an outward display of the Messiahship in pomp and power which would impress and convince even the hostile world. In spite of all His teaching about the nearness and the need of His sacrifice and about the inward spiritual and ethical relation to Himself which after His Resurrection would unite them to Himself, they were still indulging in foolish and fond fancies that somehow even yet

the world might be won from hostility to submission by some extraordinary evidence of the Messiah's authority, dignity, power, and right to reign.

2. This question by Judas raises one of the most important and urgent problems which scholarship is forcing on Christian thought to-day. Was Jesus or was He not merely a man of His own land and age? Is His teaching explicable by His heredity and environment? Does Jewish Apocalyptic limit and determine His outlook on the future? Is everything in the Synoptists which goes beyond and above the Jewish eschatology in regard to the kingdom of God not a report of His teaching, but a reflexion of the later faith of the Church? Is this teaching in the Fourth Gospel not from the lips of Jesus Himself, but has the evangelist put the doctrine of Ephesus at the close of the first century into the mouth of Jesus as He sat with His disciples in the Upper Room? If the critical school which would give an affirmative answer to all these questions is right, then the whole of this volume which is seeking to interpret this farewell talk of Jesus with His disciples as authentic is based on a false assumption. While most critical problems are out of place in the pulpit, yet this view so closely touches the very core of our Christian piety that it is an exception, and may claim our attention now. It is true that Jesus did foretell His second coming in power and glory, and did clothe His prediction in the familiar language of Jewish prophecy; that this teaching had a dominating

influence in the early Church, so that the Apostolic Age did live in an eager expectancy of His speedy return; and that hitherto Christian scholars have not given due weight to these two facts. But it is no less true that even in the Synoptic Gospels there are traces of a more ethical and spiritual conception of the kingdom of God; that in Paul's letters, while the common view of the Second Advent remains, the conception of Christian life as not merely a looking forward to future reunion with Christ, but as already a personal union with Him, emerges; and that in the Fourth Gospel the popular expectation recedes still farther into the background, and the eternal life in Christ as a present reality is not only taught, but reported as the teaching of Jesus Himself. As regards the eschatological teaching of Jesus it is probable that in predicting His future He necessarily used not only symbolic speech, but even the familiar terminology without intending it to be taken with prosaic literalness; that this teaching was more liable than most of the other utterances to modification in transmission by the common beliefs current in the Church on the question; that the Master Himself had a finer insight and a clearer foresight regarding God's works and ways than His disciples could have; and that, misunderstanding Him, they sometimes misrepresented Him. As here, so throughout the Gospels the disciples are represented as not able to grasp the more ethical and spiritual view.

3. This consideration as arising more immediately

out of the text may detain us a little longer. The evangelists are supposed to have reached a more ethical and spiritual view than Jesus Himself, to have then ascribed it to Jesus, and finally to have represented His disciples as incapable of receiving that higher view from their Master. Unless there is convincing evidence to the contrary, we are entitled to accept as true the much more probable representation of the Gospels, that Jesus Himself rose above His environment by His moral and religious discernment due to His personal relation to His Father, and that the disciples were always failing to understand Him because of their Jewish prejudices and presuppositions. This assumption explains how in the early Church the lower view was more prominent than the higher, until history had disproved the expectation of a speedy advent, and a situation arose in which the new ethical and spiritual conception could be appreciated. The question of Judas which has led us into the heart of this modern controversy is of value to us as bringing home to our minds and hearts the fact of the greatness of Jesus as a teacher, learning of no man, but taught of God alone, and the consequent loneliness, surrounded as He was even in the Upper Room by disciples who, however loyal, could not rise to the heights to which He had risen, but again and again surprised and grieved Him by questions which disclosed their moral and religious distance from Him.

II.

1. It is significant how Jesus answers Judas' question. He does not criticise the view that Judas' words suggest; He does not by argument prove its falsity; He does not offer any logical demonstration of the truth of the contrary view which He has been stating; but He simply confirms His previous statement (ver. 21) with slight verbal alterations. Obedient love as the condition of the love of the Father is again demanded, and the only difference requiring notice is that while in the first statement Jesus promises that in love He will manifest Himself, He does not in the second repeat the word which had led Judas astray in his understanding, but promises that He and the Father will make the obedient and loving Spirit their habitation. With this new thought may be compared the statements in 1 Cor. iii. 16 and Rev. iii. 20. Paul uses the thought as a powerful plea against impurity, and the Revelation as a gracious call to penitence. The mutual immanence of Himself and His disciples depends, as we have seen, on His mutual immanence with God as Father. With this difference from the previous statement we may find only a confirmation of it; and we need not therefore go over the same ground again in discussing further the contents of this utterance; but we may linger on the fact of repetition as an illustration of the method of Jesus in imparting His truth to men.

2. When He began His teaching, He impressed the multitude by the novelty of the method as well as the originality of the contents of His teaching (Mark i. 22, 27). Just as He Himself apprehended the truth intuitively, and not by reasoning, so He made declarations, and did not offer demonstrations of it. He did use illustrations of the truth He taught; but it may be said that He seldom tried to convince by argument, but usually asserted by authority. This was not due to any intellectual deficiency or any moral defect; it does not show that He was not intelligent enough, and too arrogant to argue. He did not seek "a coward's castle," as the pulpit has sometimes been called, in His authority. His method was due to the *kind* of truth He taught, and the *way* He Himself came to that truth, and wished to lead others to it. For Him God was not an idea to be reached in the conclusion of an argument; for Him God was a present reality with whom He was in immediate contact and intimate communion, and all He could do was to testify to what He knew thus not as a probability, but as a certainty. Goodness was not for Him an ideal to be shown as desirable for the completion of human life, but a necessity not to be questioned but simply obeyed; and so He spoke about goodness not in *persuasives* but in *imperatives*. As He had not discovered His message for Himself, but was receiving it from the Father, it was no unwarranted self-assertion of which He was guilty in His teaching

with authority; for the confidence with which He spoke for God to men was but the converse of the certainty with which God spoke to Him; His authority was the consequence of, and in proportion to, His submissiveness. He declares the truth, and simply confirms it by repetition, because He speaks as the mouth-piece of God, as the organ of God's self-revelation.

III.

1. The authority with which Jesus taught explains the seriousness with which He warned against unbelief regarding His mission or His message. Because He knew Himself sent and taught of God He warned men that in refusing Him they were rejecting God: "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." This note had been struck before: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me" (vii. 16). "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me" (xii. 44). We may ask, Did His confidence in Himself not lead Him to be unjust to those who failed to recognise God's truth and grace in Him? The historical problems about His life, work, and teaching are for us so many and so great, the theological difficulties in the interpretation of His person, sacrifice, and salvation beset our thought to-day so seriously, that there may seem to us to be a great distance morally and spiritually between doubt of His claims and denial of God. It is true

that it is in the Fourth Gospel that this note is repeated so often, while in the Synoptists Jesus is represented as recognising a difference in guilt between blasphemy against the Son of Man and against the Holy Ghost, and only the last does He describe as an eternal sin, and so unpardonable in this age or the next (Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28, 29; Luke xii. 10). But it must be noted that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost so described is the charge that He was casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils; and accordingly Jesus does warn His enemies that their opposition to Him may develop into a spiritual insensibility for which there can be no hope. It is not the final judgment on man's eternal destiny which He is uttering, but a preparatory warning that if the present course of unbelief is persisted in it may result in a spiritual condition on which the final judgment of condemnation must fall. This is surely the meaning and aim of all such utterances of Jesus.

2. Can we find a justification for the attitude He thus assumes? Three considerations appear relevant to this question.

(1) To refuse the highest moral and spiritual good brought within reach is surely to inflict upon oneself immeasurable loss. Not to accept the truth and grace of Christ is to reject the revelation of the love of God and all the gifts in Christian experience and Christian character which that love offers. Even if in another life there should be opportunity of

choosing Christ, there still remains the loss of having lived this life without Christ; and all who know the deliverance, comfort, strength, joy, and hope Christ brings here and now in present possession, and not merely as future inheritance, must readily acknowledge that so much of measureless worth is lost by unbelief, that the seriousness of His warnings is altogether warranted; it is the best that God offers which is being spurned and missed.

(2) We must ever see Jesus' appeals in the solemn setting given to them all by His teaching about the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. While we may with some degree of confidence cherish the expectation that those who have not had the opportunity of fully knowing Christ, and so freely choosing Him in this life, may find in the next "a door of hope"; yet regarding those who have consciously and voluntarily resisted His appeal, and rejected His salvation, we must at least, however reluctantly and regretfully, admit the possibility that they may so fix their personality in opposition to God and goodness that, even if such a "door of hope" remained open to them, they would not and could not pass through it from unbelief to faith. Would Jesus have been so urgent in His insistence that to reject His Word was to reject God's, had not that possibility of a continued opposition been present to His mind?

(3) We must not ignore the fact that the Christian Church has most unwisely and pitilessly imposed intellectual problems and difficulties for many minds

between the soul and Christ, so that He does not to-day make the direct and potent appeal to the conscience and the heart of men which He in His earthly ministry sought, and now in His heavenly seeks to make. It is not acceptance of a doctrine about Himself that He first of all desires. He wants love and obedience. It is a moral and a religious appeal He makes; He offers Himself not as a solution of speculative problems, but as a satisfaction of man's hunger and thirst for God and goodness. Too often in Christian preaching the doctrine has been so prominent as to direct His appeal to the intellect, and in such a way as to provoke many doubts and questions which hinder, and do not help, faith. Too much has our education, even that which claims to be Christian, been one-sidedly intellectual, and so the personality of many has been developed in such a way as to make them less responsive to Christ's grace and truth than they might have been. Too little has the Christian Church made it its aim to develop the moral and the spiritual personality, the aspiration for goodness and God as the dominating interest in the life. The Jewish nation had that as its dominating interest; but unfortunately in the circles which opposed themselves to Jesus morality and religion themselves had been so misdirected and perverted as to be the greatest hindrance to the acceptance of His truth and grace. He had more hope of influencing the moral and religious outcasts than the respectable in character and piety. If we would but

give first things the first place in education; if we would put goodness and godliness before cleverness and knowledge, Christ would make so direct and potent an appeal that in His truth and grace men would more generally than they do recognise the reality of God, and submit themselves to its claims and gifts.

XVII.

THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT.

"These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."—JOHN xiv. 25, 26.

THE repeated failure of the disciples to understand the teaching of their Master forces on us the question, Why did Jesus not adapt His teaching more closely to the capacity of the disciples? The question is still more pressed upon us in view of the promise of the Paraclete. Why did He not hold back the teaching for which the disciples were not yet ready, and leave all He had left unsaid to be imparted in due time by the enlightening Spirit? The time of personal intercourse with His disciples was short; and it was necessary for Him to use to the full the opportunity for preparing them by His instruction and influence for the new conditions under which their moral and spiritual development must take place. There were certain truths which could be impressed upon them only by His personal influence; and had to find a lodgment in their

memory at least because of their affection for Him, even if they did not, and could not, fully understand them, in order that a sure foundation might be laid on which the teaching of the Spirit might be built. We have to consider on the one hand *the preparation for the Spirit's teaching by Jesus*, and on the other *the completion of the teaching of Jesus by the Spirit.*

I.

1. It is personality which impresses the mind and influences the will. Bishop Phillips Brooks, himself a great preacher, has described preaching as "truth through personality." We may find an example in Jesus. He Himself gave the words their charm and power. The truth and grace of God must come to His disciples through His companionship with them. Before they could be receptive of, and responsive to, the influence of the other Companion and Helper, before through the Spirit's agency they could realise a spiritual communion with the invisible Saviour and Lord, it was necessary that in His visible presence and by His audible voice their spiritual development should have reached a certain stage. Some things must be spoken by Him while He was still bodily present with them. Nor was this necessity peculiar to the disciples. Religious and spiritual truth reaches and moves men most surely and mightily through persons. It is not only at lowly doors that truth embodied in a tale enters most easily.

2. The Gospels bear witness how much was lodged in the memory which had not, and could not yet enter into the understanding, and being remembered was understood when the disciples were ready for the truth. We may surely give this principle a wider application than the context of the statements in John ii. 22, xii. 26 offers. May we not also in these statements find a clue to the mystery of the Fourth Gospel as compared with the Synoptics? The eye-witnesses who supplied the material for the Synoptists seem to have remembered what they could in some measure understand, and therefore were interested in; and to have forgotten much that did not make so immediate an appeal. The reminiscences of the author of the Fourth Gospel were not so confined; so dear was his Master to him, and so precious His every word, that he preserved in his memory much which at the time he could not understand, and the meaning of which he discovered after many days.

3. This testimony of the Fourth Gospel, so interesting as casting a sidelight on its authorship, is confirmed in the Third Gospel: "And they were all astonished at the majesty of God. But while all were marvelling at all the things which he did, he said unto his disciples, Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask him about this saying" (Luke ix. 43–45; cf.

xviii. 34). After the Resurrection, according to Luke, the disciples "remembered his words" (xxiv. 8). If Jesus had confined Himself in His teaching to what the disciples could understand, if He had left nothing lodged in their memory to be understood in the first light of His Crucifixion and Resurrection, it is certain that much of unspeakable worth to them afterwards, and to the Christian Church always, would have remained unspoken. The success of Jesus' method with His disciples suggests that the theorists who would forbid children being taught anything they cannot at once understand are carrying a sound principle to an extreme.

4. The method of Jesus can be vindicated on a wider range of history than His training of the Twelve. It has been a cause of surprise to many that the generations which followed the Apostolic Age show so little understanding of the distinctive Gospel of Paul. But these generations were wise enough to preserve what they could not fully assimilate, and so the Pauline Epistles were collected, and transmitted to a time when Paul as a Christian teacher could in some measure come into his own, as in the teaching of Augustine and Luther. How much for the piety of the Middle Ages did Francis of Assisi's return to the Gospels, as he understood them, mean! If the progress of the Church has again and again been due to the recovery of forgotten or neglected truths, how foolish and wrong is any age which would reduce its Christian inheritance of ideas

and ideals to what it can itself apprehend and approve, and pass that only on as its bequest to future ages! The Church's permanent memory of the Christian deposit of faith is far more precious to mankind than the intelligence which any one age can apply to it; for what it cannot understand may come as light out of darkness to a subsequent age.

5. The Apostolic Age would not have admitted as true what contradicted the truth as Jesus had taught it; and so consistent with the teaching of Jesus does the development of doctrine in the New Testament appear, that the Christian Church has quite properly made the New Testament the standard of what is permanently and universally Christian. Without this criterion the Church would be the sport of the subjectivity of individuals and periods. Men have claimed as the Spirit's teaching what to the unprejudiced mind was manifestly individual error when tested by the truth of Jesus. The *Zeitgeist* has often failed to be the true interpreter of the eternal Spirit of truth and grace. While there are ideas and ideals which the Christian reason and conscience have no difficulty in approving or condemning, there are others about which either might be made to err did not the historical revelation in Christ remain as an infallible test. That it is not easy to apply the test may be admitted; and that one age has accepted as Christian what another has rejected must be confessed; but nevertheless it is an immeasurable gain to the Christian Church that Jesus so taught and

trained His disciples, committing to their memory what they could not yet receive in their understanding, that His truth and grace can be transmitted as an objective reality from age to age to control and direct the subjective development of individual believers, or local communities, so as to give the Christian Church a unity and identity in Him as its Head.

II.

1. The historical reality of Jesus Christ—that is the principle of permanence in the Christian Church; but there is also a principle of progress. Although Jesus said as much as His disciples could remember, and even more than they could fully understand, to the very end He had to exercise a reserve of utterance not to overstrain their minds. As His teaching was the preparation of the Spirit's teaching, so was the Spirit's teaching the completion of His. The truth stated in ver. 26 in our text is more fully given in xvi. 12, 13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." In a previous sermon the doctrine of the Spirit has already been dealt with; and accordingly attention must be confined here to the relation of the teaching of the Spirit to the teach-

ing of Jesus. As the Father sends the Spirit in the name of Jesus, that is in accordance with the revelation of the Son, the Spirit's teaching is not an addition to, or a substitute for, or a correction of the teaching of Jesus. There is only one revelation of God as Father, and that is in the Son, and the function of the Spirit is to complete that revelation by interpreting and applying it according to the varied and varying needs of men and ages. "He shall glorify me," says Jesus, "for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (xvi. 14). This being the general function of the Spirit, what are the methods of His working in its discharge?

2. The Spirit brings to remembrance all that Jesus taught.

(1) This does not mean, as it has sometimes been held to mean, that the memory of the disciples was supernaturally endowed with a meticulous accuracy in order to preserve the words and works of Jesus without the omission or the modification of anything. The Gospels in their differences are an evidence that no such gift was theirs. The Spirit was not given to take the place of the reporter's shorthand. But can there be any doubt that we remember the sayings and doings of those in whom we are interested, as we do not even what we once knew about those for whom we do not care? A friend's word of endearment or a foe's utterance of scorn is vividly remembered, it may be even as long as life lasts, as the speeches which have not touched our hearts are not. In giving

to the Christian life of the disciples a fuller vitality and vigour the Spirit did stimulate the remembrance of Jesus, what He was, said, and did. Because the evangelist seems to have loved Jesus with a finer discernment, a keener sympathy, and a more intense devotion than the other disciples, he remembered more of the sayings of Jesus, and doubtless in after years, as he meditated on the wondrous life of which he had been a witness, moved by the Spirit, his reminiscences crowded upon him in more living reality; and under the Spirit's guidance, disclosed fresh meanings in these reflections which he has blended with his reminiscences as from one source.

(2) The confirmation of the promise is written in the history of the Church. The revivals of the Church have been returns to Jesus. In Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Luther, things which had been forgotten in the Church were brought to remembrance by the Spirit's enlightening and quickening. We have in our own time witnessed just such a recovery of forgotten teaching of Jesus. The social aspects of the teaching of Jesus, long ignored, are again coming to their own. We may be confident that in the future as in the past no occasion will arise in which the Spirit will not bring to remembrance some teaching of Jesus, the meaning of which has not been fully grasped hitherto, but which will be clearly understood when it is needed for the progress of the kingdom of God. We might say that the sense of need is the reason why the discovery of the fresh meaning in the

forgotten teaching is made; but if we believe that the higher life of man is a partnership with God, we may gratefully acknowledge that it is not merely human discovery, but the Spirit's working in bringing to remembrance what is best suited to meet the immediate and urgent need.

3. The Spirit teaches all things by guiding into all the truth. An extension is sometimes given to the words which the context in no way allows. Men have justified innovations in doctrine and practice by claiming that they were being guided by the Spirit of truth, even when these were inconsistent with, and contradictory of, the teaching of Jesus, the revelation of God's truth and grace. The Spirit who is sent in the name of Christ illumines the mind of the Christian believer within, and not beyond, the range of the truth as it is in Jesus. There is here no promise of fresh revelations about God, superseding the revelation in Christ, but only fresh discernment, and so fresh interpretation and application of the revelation in Christ. As we look back on the history of the Church, and recall the results of fresh revelations claimed apart from such fuller unfoldings of the meaning of the revelation in Christ, the conviction will be forced upon us that it is not the Spirit of God who has guided men into ideas and ideals which cannot justify themselves by the mind of Christ. In the Church's possession of the Spirit enlightening the reason and quickening the conscience we have the pledge and the power of progress in doctrine and

practice from age to age; but this progress must always be in accord with the permanence of the authority of the revelation of Christ. Otherwise extravagances, vagaries, and even aberrations would claim acceptance unchecked on the ground that the individual offering them claimed to be guided into truth by the Spirit. There is security for a safe and good development of thought and life in the Church only as the Spirit's guidance is claimed, not into some vague abstraction truth, but into the historical reality of the revelation of the Father in the Son.

4. The danger of a wayward subjectivity under cover of the claim of the Spirit's guidance has unhappily led the Church to seek safety in some ecclesiastical organisation, as the authority in creed and code, on the ground that such an organisation is the only legitimate organ of the Spirit's illumination. But councils and synods, as we look back in the history of the Church, have so often erred, that it would be rash folly to claim for them infallibility. Sometimes the solitary saint now appears to us as the one organ for his age of the Spirit's activity. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit, and He is the Spirit of truth. Sanctity and sincerity are essential to the man who would be the organ of the Spirit; and in the long run it is the reason and conscience of the Christian community as a whole, and not any of its ecclesiastical organisations, which can test the claim of any man to speak by and for the Spirit of God. It is Christian experience and Christian character which alone guarantee the presence

and the operation of the Spirit of God in any individual and in any community. The Christian Church may confidently expect to be guided by the Spirit into all the truth, but it must be prepared to fulfil the conditions of such guidance in an intenser piety and a more elevated morality; for only thus can the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, dwell and work within its thought and life.

5. A third function is assigned to the Spirit in xvi. 13, namely, prophecy: "He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." There may be some doubt about the genuineness of this statement on two grounds. On the one hand, the Spirit is most closely related to prophecy in the Old Testament, and so the clause, even if not uttered by Jesus, might easily be suggested to the mind of the evangelist, and find its way into his reminiscences of the teaching of Jesus. On the other hand, prophecy in the sense of prediction has never had a conspicuous, influential, or beneficent position in Christian thought and life. Probably more folly has been displayed in the attempts at prediction in interpreting the Book of Daniel or the Revelation than in any other efforts of Christian thought. But with spiritual insight there often goes a measure of foresight. What the future of the Church should be, as an object to be prayed, lived, and worked for, believers may expect to anticipate in some measure by the Spirit's illumination. The Spirit too may offer a convincing inward witness of the certainty of the Christian outlook for the future

life. As a man is spiritual may he not also hope to be able to interpret the course of human history as the fulfilment of the purpose of God? In this sense the Spirit may illumine the future as a guide to duty, a ground of hope, and a reinforcement of faith, even as he recalls the past in its abiding meaning and worth, and sets the present need and claim of the world in the light of the permanent and yet progressive revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

XVIII.

THE LAST BEQUEST.

"Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful."—JOHN xiv. 27.

THE reality of His separation from His disciples, the nearness of death, was brought home to the heart of Jesus in His previous utterance regarding the shortness of the time remaining to Him to teach them all He would impart of His truth and grace, and the need of leaving to the Spirit's ministry the completion of His unfinished task in regard to them. When a man dies, the question is often asked, What was he worth ? What has he left ? If we put these questions about Jesus, we should have to answer, Nothing. He had left His mother as a precious legacy to the beloved disciple. His clothes were the perquisite of His executioners. What money was in the common bag, Judas doubtless had kept. He alone was a little richer for Jesus' death. Yet dying so poor a man, with no wealth at His command, He possessed, besides His teaching and the presence of His Spirit, a treasure which He alone could leave to them,

and of which they could not be deprived. His last bequest—His peace—has three characteristics: it is *personal, genuine,* and *seasonable.*

I.

1. The words which give us the first characteristic of Jesus' last bequest, εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν, would be better rendered *the peace which is mine,* which is peculiar to me, and distinctive of me, and so belongs to my person. When we receive a legacy we value it, if we are moved by genuine affection, not by its amount, but by the closeness of its association with the person who has left it. An article of clothing or furniture belonging to the beloved has more value for the loving heart than money in a bank. As I sit and write, around me are articles once used by loved ones who have gone before, and they form an environment in which my spirit desires to dwell and work. This peace of Christ's which bears the distinctive impress of His Spirit is so much richer a legacy, because it is so personal. It is His peace, not because it comes to us through Him, but because it was the condition of spirit in which He Himself lived. We shall be led to the discovery of its character and conditions if we are guided by the context of His similar promise of rest to the soul in Matt. xi. 28–30. This rest is to be found by coming to Him, learning of Him, and sharing His yoke and His burden; and that yoke is easy and that burden light, because as we thus become

one with Him, and so like Him, we too are made meek and lowly in heart. Wherein that meekness and lowliness of heart first of all and most of all consists is shown in the preceding verses (25–26). It is filial gratitude, submission, dependence, confidence, and service. His peace as the Son of God becomes ours as we become the children of God with the same attitude towards God as His life ever displayed. Trustfulness and thankfulness, surrender and fellowship in our relation to God as His companions, disciples, fellow-labourers—these are the conditions of the peace which is His. This peace has a negative as well as a positive aspect, each of which claims consideration.

2. Jesus does not promise the labouring and the heavy-laden to whom He assures rest that there will be no burden and no yoke. He assumes that there will still be the sorrows and trials and toils, but they will not overstrain and overwhelm the spirit as they without Him would have done. It is not change of circumstance by which Jesus gives His peace or rest, but change of character. Paul's case may serve as an illustration. He prayed thrice that the stake in his flesh might be removed. It was not removed, but he got the assurance of the sufficiency of grace, of Christ's strength made perfect in his weakness. Christ does not promise any of His followers that their life outwardly will be made easier or more comfortable than it was, that there will be no pain, grief, bereavement in it. He often calls them for His sake and in the interests of the kingdom of God to run risks, endure

hardships, sustain labours, make sacrifices which the world dare not demand of its devotees. The honour and privilege He has offered to some of His disciples is martyrdom, and in circumstances of extreme shame and suffering. It is not Christian faith, but pagan unbelief, which claims from Christ exemption from the common lot of sickness, pain, and death itself. The burden and the yoke remain, but become light and easy because Christ gives the meek and the lowly heart.

3. The rest or peace Christ promises is an inward condition, which is independent of, unaffected by, outward circumstances. It is not a Stoic apathy, nor an Epicurean tranquillity, secured by scorning or shunning the common needs and pains of life. There is in the loving Christian heart a heightened and not a lowered sensibility, an intensified and not a decreased emotion, a fuller unfolding of the whole personality with consequent greater possibility of pain and grief. But the difference is here. The Christian has a life in God as the child of God which reaches beyond and rises above all his outward lot may bring. Trusting in, surrendered to, and in loving fellowship with God he has unfailing comfort and succour, strength and courage; he is sufficient for all things, for he does not seek, as he could not find, his sufficiency in himself, but he both seeks and finds it in God through Jesus Christ. Even as Christ was able to endure and suffer and even taste death in His loving obedience as Son to God as His Father, so in Christ the Christian is

able to attain blessedness when happiness is denied, triumphs when defeat threatens, remains confident in hope when appearances counsel despair, and in the changes of time enjoys the eternal life in God.

II.

1. There is many a bequest which is more loss than gain to him who receives it, which imposes burdens and disappoints hopes; but not so is it with the last bequest of Jesus. It is *genuine.* This characteristic Jesus brings out by contrasting His giving with the world's. The difference may be considered as two-fold, *what* is given and *how* it is given; and these aspects of the world's giving are closely connected, for the method of the gift will depend on the nature of it. What now does the world offer when it yields a man the best it can give? Wealth, fame, position, praise, comfort, ease, strength, health—these assuredly are goods which men desire, and in which they find satisfaction, but only as long as the higher needs are unfelt. The aspiration for truth, holiness, love, the hunger and thirst after God, the desire for the pardon of, and the deliverance from sin, the craving for certainty regarding the future life—all these are real human needs; and the world can do nothing to meet them.

Not only so; but if these needs are unmet, man loses his sense of pleasure in the goods that the world can offer. The infinite possibility of the soul

cannot find fulfilment in the finite reality of any of these. It is only by leaving undeveloped, or by choosing to suppress, the higher life within himself that a man can rest content with any of the goods which the world can offer him.

2. Further, the way in which the world gives shows how much less genuine is its giving. While health and strength may be the lot of men generally, and we probably think there is more pain in the world because as unusual it attracts our attention more, yet there are many to whom this good does not come. How very few comparatively are the rich who can command comfort and ease for themselves, and how many find life a hard and constant struggle even for daily bread, the supply of their most urgent needs. Fame and praise are reserved for a very small minority, and the great majority must live unregarded and unappreciated lives, and receive but scant thanks for all their toil. Again, how uncertain are the goods of the world, one day gained, the next day lost! The Greek saying, "Call no man happy till the day of his death," expresses the general feeling of the weak grasp any man has over any treasures which at the moment he may hold. To all at last comes death, when all the goods of the world cease to have any worth; the world's giving has no permanence, no certainty, no universality.

3. The gift which Christ offers of the soul's inward satisfaction in God amid the most adverse outward circumstances is of immeasurable value for

all men. It is true that many men do not realise its value, and, therefore, do not desire it. But is not the worst tragedy conceivable for a soul made for God's likeness and God's fellowship, that it does not feel its need of God, goodness, and immortality? Christ's own judgment of the man content with the abundance of his earthly possessions is that he is a fool (Luke xii. 20). In the presence of death a man will often recognise that it will profit him nothing to gain the whole world, if he lose his soul (Matt. xvi. 26). But how few are there to whom, even if their higher nature is undeveloped, the world does give satisfaction! There are sorrows, griefs, bereavements, failures, and disappointments from which no earthly goods, even if they could be attained, would give relief or deliverance. Not seldom does the soul awake to its higher needs, when its lower desires have been unsatisfied and its lower expectations disappointed. "In the year that King Uzziah died," the king on whom the young prophet had set his hopes, as the agent of the nation's good, Isaiah "saw the Lord high and lifted up" (vi. 1). When the world disappoints, then often do men begin to seek the genuine gift Christ offers.

4. The worth of the gift is enhanced by the way of its giving. It is offered to and may be had by all. It is not so with worldly goods generally. In the race of this life all do not, and cannot, gain the prizes. The more one man makes his own, the more

must others lack that he may abound. Effort for the many, but exceptional success for the few. Moral and spiritual good, however, does not lessen its content as it widens its extent. The more men possess the peace of God, the greater is its worth to the possessor. Full blessedness in God can come only when all are blessed in Him. Again, the universal gift is also the certain gift. Faith can always be sure of grace; the man who trusts in God, and as he trusts in God, possesses the peace of God. Christ's promises are not deceptive. Their fulfilment is not a probability, but a certainty. No outward circumstances can be so adverse as to limit the resources of His grace to comfort, sustain, and succour. The testimony of Christian experience is that nothing but a man's own unbelief and disobedience can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord (Rom. viii. 39). Lastly, the gift is permanent: it does not cease as all earthly goods must cease at death. As Jesus on His Cross committed His soul unto God, so can the Christian believer fall asleep in Jesus, being kept in perfect peace because his soul is stayed on God. Truly Christ gives neither only what nor as the world gives.

III.

1. The gift Christ offered to His disciples was a *seasonable* gift; for they were troubled and fearful. The hymn beginning with the line, "Peace, perfect

peace, in this dark world of sin," in its succeeding verses brings before us the manifold reasons men always have for trouble and fear of heart. Sin abounding, duty pressing, sorrow surging around us, our loved ones far away, the future unknown, death shadowing us and ours—this is life, if not always, yet at times, for all of us. If, as were in their own imperfect way the disciples, we are concerned about the kingdom of God we widen the range of our anxieties and regrets, for how often do we witness the failure of good causes and the success of evil undertakings; how often is Christ seen on the Cross and Nero on the throne in this world; how does the Christian Church fail in realising the ideal in the mind of its Head even as it is reproduced in the conscience of those to whom He reveals His secrets; and how far short does each of us fall of what he would be!

2. As the hymn referred to indicates, there is a divine provision in Christ for every human necessity. While the outward circumstances may remain unchanged, and so the causes of the distress and anxiety are not removed, all the world and all life are seen in a new light in the new revelation of God in Christ, so that the very circumstances which seemed most hostile to our peace may become the occasions of our entering into fuller possession of it in Christ. How significant in this connection is the vision of the seer in Patmos (Rev. v.). None can open the book of the mystery of God's works and

ways in the world except the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; but when he looks for the Lion, he beholds the Lamb as it had been slain. Some thinkers, confronted with the problem of evil, have expected the solution of it by God's omnipotence. The Christian revelation is that God solves the world's problem by sacrificial love. Of this objective divine reality the peace Christ gives is the subjective human reflection. Christ does not cheat us with an illusive ease or relief, which to our despair when our eyes are again opened to reality we shall detect as false and vain. It is because His love has the mastery over all evil that we need not be troubled or afraid.

3. The seasonableness of this gift to mankind is surely one of the clearest proofs of the superiority of Christianity to other religions. For we may surely test the worth of a religion by the solution it offers of the problem of evil and sin. Many religions fall far short of the Christian conscience of sin, confusing ceremonial offences and moral transgressions, and offering an uncertain solution of the problem of guilt by the institution of animal sacrifice, the inadequacy of which the keener conscience of the Old Testament saints soon discovered. An expectation of God's mercy to the broken and contrite heart is the height to which Hebrew saintship rose (Ps. li.). The belief in salvation for the sinful through the self-sacrifice of the righteous, as expressed in Isa. liii., is an Old Testament anticipation of the

solution in Christ. The peace of God's pardon is assured to the conscience burdened by guilt, in the sacrifice which judges the sin forgiven. So, too, the problem of death to which other religions have given a solution of dread rather than hope has been solved in Christ's victory over death, and the assurance of like victory in eternal life with Him which He gives to all believers. Pain, grief, and sorrow, when sin has been forgiven and immortality assured, become the light affliction which is for a moment, but which worketh out a more exceeding even an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. iv. 17).

4. In closing, we may ask ourselves whether we do claim this legacy of Christ's as fully and often as we ought. We are not the victims but the masters of circumstance; for the reality of our life lies in a region which outward conditions cannot invade. Nevertheless, how many Christians are as much troubled and afraid in adverse circumstances in regard to their health, or wealth, or fame, as any worldling might be! Allowing for physical conditions and personal temperament all that in generosity of judgment we can allow, do we, do Christians generally, prove to the world the worth of their faith in Christ by the calmness and courage with which they endure trial or face peril? In the hour of bereavement do we sorrow as though hopeless and comfortless in Christ? As regards the kingdom of God do we not often speak as if the forces of evil were prevailing, and would more prevail, over the power of God?

Melancholy and despondency, and not merely complaint and rebellion, are a denial of the faith we profess in Christ as the solution of the world's problem, a refusal of the legacy He has left His Church of the peace that is His.

XIX

CHRIST'S UNREQUITED LOVE.

"Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe."—JOHN xiv. 28, 29.

JESUS offered the disciples, as His last bequest, His peace, because their hearts were troubled and afraid. In His unselfishness He was ministering to their need; but their need showed their selfishness. If they had been more responsive to His love for them, they would have been more appreciative of His mood of exaltation in the prospect of His completed sacrifice and accomplished triumph. They would have shared His joy, and in sharing His joy would have been fitter to face the trial which lay before them. This was the aim of all His teaching, that their faith might not fail, because, recognising His death as a return to the Father, and so gain to Him, they could accept even His departure from them not as loss only to themselves. These words of Jesus present to us a threefold contrast between Himself and His disciples: (1) a sad fact and a glad

hope; (2) a selfish grief and an unselfish joy; (3) a faithless fear and a believing foresight.

I.

1. In all His announcements of His passion Jesus included the expectation of His Resurrection. From the beginning of His ministry *the sad fact* of His sacrifice was present to His mind, as there is evidence in the Gospels that the ideal He set Himself to realise was that of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah as depicted in Isa. liii. It is entirely in accord with the conditions of the Incarnation as presented in the Gospels that He should learn His Father's will concerning His work from meditation on the Sacred Scriptures. If we have reason thus to derive His anticipation of death from this source, may we not turn to it also for the explanation of His confidence that He would not perish in death, but would be raised from the dead? Whatever may be the historical interpretation, the concluding portions of the 16th (vers. 8–11) and the 17th (ver. 15) Psalms would probably suggest to Jesus deliverance from death as *the glad hope* reached. It was because of the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame (Heb. xii. 2). Whether the words, "I come unto you," refer to His Resurrection or to His Second Advent matters not; in either case Jesus does not stop with the *sad fact*, He passes on to the *glad hope*.

2. With the disciples the contrary was the case. In spite of all His efforts to prepare them for His Passion by His repeated announcements, the certainty of His death, when they were at last compelled to face it, fell on them as a staggering blow; and all they could for the moment realise was the *sad fact* that their Master was going from them. Had they given heed to His teaching, they would not only have been saved this overwhelming shock, but the comfort they needed in their sorrow, and the hope which could have triumphed over their disappointment, would have been theirs. But they were so absorbed with their own aims and hopes that they refused to consider even the possibility of the death of their Master. So great was their loss that when this grief overwhelmed them they could not summon to their aid the assurances of His resurrection which He had so often given to them. Their comfortless and hopeless condition was the penalty that they had to pay for their disregard for Jesus' teaching, a disregard blameworthy because arising from a lack of trust in, and surrender to, Him as was His due.

3. The condition of the disciples is full of warning and, if we heed the warning, of encouragement to us. As Christians we can place over against the sad fact of death the glad hope of immortality. Indeed, over against every sad fact of human experience we can set the glad hope of the divine revelation and human redemption in Christ. But it may be that we grow so indifferent to the comfort, assurance, and succour,

which the Christian gospel is ever offering to us, that when the hour of loss, or grief, or bereavement comes upon us we cannot summon the divine help for our human need. And it may be that our indifference has been due to the absorption of our minds and hearts in the comfort, pleasure, or success of this earthly life, and our consequent disregard of those realities of life which bring sorrow and disappointment. It is well for us to prepare for our evil day. Let us not like the Epicurean seek tranquillity of life by shutting our eyes to, or fleeing away from, the evil in the world, which may at any moment come upon us; but let us rather recognise it to the full in order that we may feel our need of the divine deliverance from evil, and may ever possess in ourselves such an assurance of the sufficiency of the divine grace that in the hour of trial there may come swift and sure the triumph of faith.

II.

1. The result for the disciples of their inability to meet the new situation in which they found themselves was this, that they were unable to fulfil the obligation towards Jesus which it imposed upon them. Their *selfish grief* shut them out from His *unselfish joy*; and so the fellowship of love between Him and them was interrupted. "If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced." That they were troubled and afraid, and so failed to enter into His joy was an evidence, not of

entire disloyalty and abandonment, for Jesus does not mean to charge them with so great a failure, but of an inadequate affection and devotion. For the reality of love is measured by the self-forgetfulness and oneness of interest with the loved one which it inspires. Love is the loss of self and the finding of self again in another life. Had the disciples loved as they ought, they would have lost their grief and found their joy in Christ's joy. We may then, without exaggeration, speak of this as an instance of *Jesus' unrequited love.* Their love again failed in Gethsemane. When in His sorrow unto death He asked the chosen three to watch with Him they all slept; and so in the triumph as in the trial of His faith, in the exaltation of the Upper Room as in the agony of the Garden, He was left alone with His joy or His sorrow.

2. It is not for us, however, to blame the disciples; for how often must this tragedy be repeated in the relation of Christ to His Church. There is a progress of the kingdom of God on earth; Christ is seeing of the travail of His soul, and is being satisfied; the dawn of God's Day is on the horizon of human history; and nevertheless because of some present failure, delay, or disappointment in its work on earth, the Christian Church fails to enter into its Master's joy. Or the individual believer so cherishes his private sorrow that he is indifferent to, and even refuses to participate in, the larger good which, if his eyes were not so blinded with his tears, he might see coming to mankind. The counterpart is also true. There may be, through

moral and spiritual insensibility, a failure to share the sorrow of Christ for the world's sin and unbelief. Joy as well as grief may make selfish. But the danger in the second case is even greater than the first, because while the man with any conscience at all feels ashamed of selfish gladness, he very often persuades himself, and others are ready to allow his excuse, that sorrow exempts from the common duty to others as joy does not, and so he is morally entitled to indulge his grief, however forgetful or neglectful of others it may make him.

3. But it may be said, if the disciples were to blame for their selfish grief, which hindered their sharing their Master's joy, was His joy not as selfish in not sharing their grief? We must now show that it was an unselfish joy which Jesus opposed to their selfish grief. It was not a good for Himself alone of which He was so glad. His return to His Father, greater than He, was for their immeasurable gain, although they might now fail to realise it. Without such a return He could not become to them and all other believers the universal and constant presence. He could not rise above the limitations which life in the body involved as regards both teaching and work; the other Companion and Helper could not come to them; they could not do the greater works He had promised them. Their sorrow need not have been so comfortless and hopeless, had they learned from Him what the return meant both for Him and for them. It would not have been love for Jesus to have left His

disciples in their sorrow by sharing it with them; it was love for Him to strive to lift them out of it into His own joy in His return to the Father. It is not love for us to weep with those who weep, if we may, by ministering to them the comfort and succour which is in Christ, change their sorrow into joy. Sympathy with sorrow, which is not helpless and hopeless pity, will ever strive to lift out of sorrow; and we have been most loving to another's sorrow when we get him, if we can, to share our joy.

4. There has been much theological debate about the words in which Jesus gives the reason why He calls His disciples to leave their selfish grief and rise to His unselfish joy: "The Father is greater than I." The explanation can be given in a very few words, for much has already been said about the moral and religious characteristics of the relation of Christ to God. Sonship in Him and for Him meant dependence on, and submission to, the Father, as well as confidence in, and communion with, the Father. If the terms Father and Son are not empty titles, and do not express only similar love between God and Christ, without any peculiarity in the love of each to the other, then the relation involves necessarily the priority of the Father and the subordination of the Son. In His whole earthly life Jesus never treated God as only His equal, but always as greater than He. We have no right, unless we make the historical reality a concealment and not a revelation of the eternal reality of God, to assert that only in the

earthly life was the Son so related to the Father that He thought of Him as greater. If the Trinity is not economic, but essential, then the terms Father and Son mean in the heavenly life of God some distinction of relation such as appears in the earthly life of Jesus. The Son is really God; but in the Godhead He already holds such relation to the Father as is the type, pledge, and source of man's sonship towards God.

III.

1. Why were the disciples absorbed by their selfish grief about the sad fact of their Master's departure from them? Because their attitude to the future was one of *unbelieving fear*. Why was Jesus full of an unselfish joy in the glad hope of His return to the Father? Because His attitude was one of *believing foresight*. He who has not the test of things not seen will lack the assurance of things hoped for (Heb. xi. 1). Jesus was ever exercising this believing foresight on behalf of His disciples that He might save them from this unbelieving fear. He had foretold His death and His resurrection that the fulfilment of His words might be for the confirmation of their faith: "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe." A similar explanation of His habit of thus forewarning His disciples is found in xiii. 19. It must be frankly admitted that both these sayings do appear rather as reflections of the evangelist's than as reminiscences of Jesus' speech.

That He did forewarn His disciples is a fact about which there need be no doubt. That His intention in so forewarning them was to save them, when the danger or evil foretold came upon them, from fear, and to confirm them in their faith in Him, is altogether probable. But it is not quite so likely that He would explain to them why He was acting as He did. That is not usually a teacher's method. It is, at least, as likely that the evangelist had meditated on the fact of Jesus' warnings, had found this reason for them, and after a lapse of time had blended his reflection with his reminiscence. Be this as it may, whether Jesus spoke these words Himself, or the evangelist has put them on His lips, it is an explanation which can be accepted, and, as relevant to the subject engaging our attention, deserves our further scrutiny.

2. Jesus did foresee and foretell the course of His life and work. It was not as a probability, calculated from the circumstances of His ministry, but as a certainty, recognised by Him as the will of God for Him, that He made announcement of His Passion. To suggest the Resurrection there was nothing in His outward circumstance, and so there can be no doubt here that His confidence of it rested on no merely human calculation. His foresight in both cases was due to His insight. Because He as Son knew God as Father He knew what God's will held for Him in the future. For Him who lived in the Eternal the future was not so mysterious as it is for those who live only in the temporal. The prospect of the man whose interest is

in the moment must be bounded by the moment. Because Christ believed in God, the future held only God's will for Him, and as Son He knew what that will was, whether for sacrifice or for victory. As His foresight was thus rooted in His faith, His receptivity and responsiveness Godward, He sought to share that foresight with His disciples, that they too might be partners in His faith.

3. Because the disciples had not heeded these declarations of His foresight, they were found lacking in His faith. The future was not seen by them in the light of faith in God, such as Christ's, and so it was full of unknown evils for them, filling their hearts with fear. As for the disciples, so for us there is only one choice; if we do not with Christ exercise faith's foresight, we shall with the disciples indulge in the fears of unbelief. It is very significant that in the description of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi.) the unseen and the future are presented as its two objects. So it is in all religion; the reality of the divine and the destiny of man are its two primary interests. As a man thinks of God, so will he hope for, or shrink from, his destiny as man. If we accept Christ's conception of God, then should we also accept as exceedingly great gain the promise for man which is prefigured in His expectation for Himself of victory over death and return to the Father. Yet there are many Christians who, professing faith in God, are full of forebodings for themselves and for the world. But our faith is weakened by such fore-

bodings. We are not trusting God now as we ought if we cannot trust Him for the future. Christ has given us, as from time to time He gave His disciples, assurances of what lies before us, that we, relying on these assurances, and finding that they do not deceive us, may without disturbing fears be confirmed in our faith.

4. Jesus has not given us such detailed warnings of the future as from time to time He gave His disciples. We have the hope in Him of the kingdom of God for the race on earth, and for ourselves of a mansion in the Father's house. Are there not many dangers and evils threatening our life and the history of man before the fruition of this hope, before which like the disciples we may fall into unbelieving fear? He saves us, as He was saved Himself, by faith's foresight. We do not foreknow particular events in our lives as He did; but then no events in our lives have such universal and permanent significance for God's revelation and man's redemption as had His Crucifixion and Resurrection. Had our lives the value for God and man His had, we too doubtless would foresee as clearly as He did. As our relation to God is not as immediate, nor our communion as intimate as His, lacking His certain insight, we too lack His confident foresight. Nevertheless, in the measure we live near to Him shall our future be clear to us so far as such knowledge may be necessary for the fulfilment of God's will by us. No idle curiosity about events in our earthly lot, which have

no meaning or worth for us as children of God, will ever be gratified. But the aspiration for sure guidance and safe guardianship in the path of duty towards God will be satisfied; and we shall face the future with the believing foresight which will deliver us from unbelieving fear.

XX.

THE FINAL SURRENDER.

"I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."—JOHN xiv. 30, 31.

WHEN His hour came Jesus was ready. In rising from the Table He declares His final surrender to His Father's will. In the words in which He announces His loving obedience to the Father in His submission unto death, He presents His death to us in its manifold relations: (1) to His disciples; (2) to the power of evil; (3) to the Father; and (4) to the world. Although one aspect of each of these relations is suggested in His words, we need not limit ourselves to the context of this saying in our exposition of each relation.

I.

1. What the death of Christ meant to His disciples has again and again been brought under our notice in meditating on this farewell discourse. It meant separation from them; His visible presence

and His audible voice withdrawn from them. But there was a deeper tragedy than that; Judas by his betrayal, Peter by his denial, and the other disciples by their flight separated themselves from Christ. All we need now do is to point out how much deeper the tragedy appears when we consider the death of Christ in the three other relations.

The entire sinlessness of Jesus, His absolute perfection, was demonstrated in His sacrifice. Suffering without fault the wrong done to Him, the pain caused Him, the cruelty inflicted on Him, the world's evil could not find sin in Him nor make Him sin. In so complete a victory over sin the disciples failed to share by love's participation, when they thus separated themselves from Him. He met and overcame "the prince of the world" alone. Again, when His constant obedience to the Father was consummated in His Sacrifice, when the Son went as far in His submission to His Father's will as for Him even was possible, they by their accord with His purpose might have taken their part in this supreme act of homage to God; but in their ignorance and indifference they missed this glorious privilege. Further, when in His obedience to God He sinlessly suffered for the world's sin, and made the revelation meant and fit for all the world, they had no share in the act of central significance for the message they were to deliver. Whether, if they had remained faithful, they or any of them would have shared His martyrdom, we cannot tell. His words in

Gethsemane, "Let these go their way" (xviii. 8), must be taken conditionally and not absolutely. The disciples were not then fit for the martyrdom to which He here seems to call them. Had they been fit, it may be they would have shared His death. Be this as it may, this is certain, that the disciples separated themselves from Christ, when to be one with Him in spirit and purpose would have been their highest glory.

2. The Cross even to-day sends forth its summons, for it is the standard of holiness as it is the channel of forgiveness to men. It challenges all who believe in Christ to share His struggle with, and conquest of, evil, His obedience to the will of the Father, His message to the world. Can the two aspects of the Christian life, penitence and faith, be represented in a more attractive and yet authoritative form than as crucifixion with Christ and resurrection with Him, death to sin and life unto God? To dwell for a moment only on the first aspect as it is here presented to us, we may ask, Is not the Cross robbed of its terror and its gloom? There is the assault of evil, but also the victory over it. There is the bitter cup, but the taking of it is the obedience of love to the Father. There is the sad story of death, but its meaning brings joy to the world. Who can tell how much Jesus suffered, because His disciples would not take up their Cross with Him! Can we now measure how great is the loss and the delay for the kingdom of God, because the Christian Church has so often

forgotten to walk in "the holy way of the Cross," and to enter into the fellowship of His suffering? Let us remember as we continue our meditations on the other aspects of the death of Jesus that there is in each one of them a call of duty for us as well as a boon for faith, so that we may not, like the disciples, separate ourselves from Him in His saving sacrifice.

II.

1. The words of Jesus, "The prince of the world cometh; and he hath nothing in me," taken literally present a very serious difficulty to the modern mind. In His teaching Jesus assumes the Jewish angelology and demonology; the belief in Satan is without challenge accepted in His speech. Even if some of His teaching may be figurative, we are not warranted in asserting that Jesus did not believe in the existence of the personal devil, or that He did not regard His death as a vain assault of the evil one upon Him. For in xii. 31 He declares, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Paul conceived the sacrifice of Christ as a victory over demons (Col. ii. 15; cf. Eph. vi. 12). In the centuries during which the belief in demons was a very real dread, comfort and hope were found in the assurance that Christ had conquered them. It would be rash for us to deny whatever we cannot understand; but it is certain that whatever the words they used meant to Jesus and to Paul, these have, taken literally, no living

meaning for us to-day, and we must translate them out of the thought of the past into that of the twentieth century.

2. Instead of thinking of Satan we think of physical and moral evil or sin. Instead of representing the death of Christ as a victory over the prince of this world, we think of it as a conquest of sin and all its consequences in pain, death, judgment. If there be any personal agencies of evil, although now they have no reality for the thought of most of us, we have the assurance that their assault on Him was vain, and that it will also be vain on us, if we meet it in Him. We need not, however, try to force our faith into unfamiliar modes of thought; and we can now confine our consideration to the relation of the death of Christ to sin and its consequences. For the disciples the death was a tragedy; in relation to sin it was a crime. It was an apocalypse of evil opposing itself to the revelation of God in Christ. The world's sin assailed Jesus in the base betrayal by Judas, in the false judgment of the Sanhedrin, in the cowardly weakness of Pilate, in the reckless fury of the multitude, in the calculated scorn and hate of the scribes and Pharisees, in the cruel violence of the Roman soldiers, in the shame and the pain of the Cross, in the mean mockery of the bystanders at Calvary. He who had refused to be made a King was charged with sedition; the Son of God, who by word and deed was revealing the Father, was condemned for blasphemy, the Sinless and Holy was reckoned with transgressors; on Him

who had brought nothing but blessing to the Jewish people was inflicted a death which Jewish belief held accursed; the Prince of Life was done to death. The agony in Gethsemane and the desolation on Calvary compel us to believe that He tasted death for every man, not only as physical dissolution, but as spiritual desolation, that He in His own holy, loving soul experienced the ultimate consequence of sin in the sense of separation from God, even if for a moment only. While here we must think and speak with caution and reverence, yet when we try to realise the vision of the world's evil which passed before the perfect moral insight and spiritual discernment of Jesus, we do not exaggerate when we say that on Calvary the world's sin was doing its worst against God's best.

3. This assault Jesus met sinless as regards both His past record and His present conduct. There was found no guilt in Him, and He was not driven to any transgression. The portrait of the Gospels is that of One holy, harmless, undefiled. It is incredible that imperfect men could have imagined a character of such perfection. But more convincing even than the testimony of the evangelists is the self-witness of Jesus (John viii. 29, 46, xv. 10). His filial religious consciousness is evidence of His sinless moral character. He would not have been so sure of God as Father if He had had any sense of sin against God. He called men to penitence and He offered them pardon; but in the record of His life there is no trace of the confession

of penitence, or of the prayer for pardon for Himself. Had He had even the memory of former follies or failures, He assuredly would have brought the acceptable sacrifice of a contrite heart. As the sinner turned saint grows in saintliness, He feels ever more keenly His sinfulness. If Jesus was not perfect, He was morally blind as regards His own condition; but that is an inconceivable supposition in view of His keen and sure moral insight. Further, could He have offered Himself as Example to men, as Saviour from sin, as Judge of all mankind, as Lord claiming an absolute devotion from His disciples, had He been in the slightest degree stained and marred by the sin, the dominion of which over man He came from God to overthrow?

4. He who had been sinless in life remained sinless in His death. The worst assault of evil could not provoke Him to sin. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. When He was cursed, He blessed. He forgot His own sorrow in pity for the weeping women on the Sorrowful Way; He prayed for the forgiveness of His foes; He assured the penitent thief of a place with Himself in paradise. Even in His cry of desolation His faith kept hold on God; even when the comfort and joy of God's presence was for a time withheld—assailed, He was unconquered by evil. He met sin's worst by God's best.

III.

1. Why did the sinless so suffer? A shallow prudential morality teaches that "honesty is the best policy," that sin is punished and virtue is rewarded. But experience is always challenging this vain philosophy. The Book of Job is the grandest literary expression of that challenge. Saints do suffer, and their suffering is not in spite, but because, of their saintliness, and often in the measure of it. To state the fact is, however, not to explain it. It seems to me the fact would remain an almost intolerable mystery were it not revealed in Christ's Cross. This solution of the problem was anticipated in what to me is the mountain-top of the Old Testament revelation, so lofty that it has already caught the glory of the dawn of the New, the picture of the Suffering Servant of God in Isa. liii., *the salvation of sinners by the vicarious sacrifice of the righteous.* We must approach this solution, however, by the teaching of Jesus regarding His death as loving obedience to the Father.

2. While there are still many Christians who take the figurative teaching of the New Testament and the symbolic ordinances of the Old with a prosaic literalness, and so talk about the blood of Christ as if it had a magical virtue for the cleansing of sin, the widespread revolt against the older evangelicalisms has been due to a true and worthy perception that the Cross can save only in virtue of the moral worth and

the spiritual meaning of the death, and these can be found only in the personality of the Crucified. Jesus Himself here justifies the demand. He goes forth to His death in order to let the world know that He loves and obeys the Father. This saying gains fuller meaning from the record of Gethsemane. At first Jesus prayed that, if possible, this cup might pass from Him, and when it became clear to Him that the cup could not pass, He prayed for, and He received, the strength that God's will might be done not on Him in passive resignation, but by Him in active obedience. However inevitable seems the historical sequence of the events which resulted in Christ's death, yet it is not the Fourth Gospel alone which represents His submission to death as voluntary. Even in Gethsemane He thought of deliverance as supernaturally possible, but morally and spiritually impossible (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54). Sure as He was of God's power to rescue Him from the violence of men, He was as sure that it was God's will that He should suffer. He willed to die; His whole personality was expressed and exercised in surrender to the Father's will; and so His death was an action, and not a passion merely.

3. That obedience was not, however, like the Moslem's submission to an inscrutable and ineluctable omnipotence. It was the obedience of love. Now what is love's obedience? It is surely to will what and as the loved wills. It is oneness of wish, choice, and deed with the loved. Christ's death, as an

act of loving obedience to God, was God's act of self-sacrifice for man's salvation in Him. In the Cross we must not separate the Father from the Son, or God's mercy from His justice. It is the one God, the Father through the Son in the eternal Spirit of holy love, who offers the sacrifice on man's behalf. The Father does not hold the Son guilty, or inflict punishment on Him instead of man; the Son does not think Himself guilty, and so accept the punishment. But God's love in the Son Incarnate so completely makes itself one with mankind, with its sin and all the consequences of the sin, that the Son and the Father in Him suffers sin's curse as His very own. God in Christ stoops from the heights of His holiness and blessedness to the depths of man's sin and misery so completely to share all that sin has brought into man's lot, that He who knew no sin became sin, and He the beloved became a curse for us.

4. Such was the divine sacrifice. But it may be asked, Why was it necessary for human salvation? The subjective view that God in Christ so suffered to move man to penitence and faith by such a proof of His love is quite inadequate. Unless there was an absolute necessity for the sacrifice, such a spectacular display of love would have had no moral or spiritual impressiveness or efficacy. If a man committed suicide to show his love for his wife, when his death was not necessary for her deliverance from death, his act would be folly. The objective view seems

inevitable, when we think deep enough with sufficient moral passion. It was only in such a sacrifice that God could finally and adequately express what sin is to Him. The holy love which forgives the sinner must judge the sin forgiven. How shall man sorrow for his sin as he ought, unless he sees in the Cross how God sorrows for it? How shall he by faith be sure of his pardon unless he is assured that it is not good-nature which casts him a costless boon, but holy love, which because it is holy has dealt with sin as it deserves, not in inflicting penalty on the sinful, but in itself suffering with and for and far beyond what is possible to man, the worst consequences of sin? If the necessity of His death came to Jesus in Gethsemane as a divine illumination, it is vain for us to try to reach it as the conclusion of a logical demonstration. If we have learned the truth, as Jesus did upon His knees before God, all we can do is to try and make our witness as intelligible and credible as we can.

IV.

In all His teaching Jesus had in view the world, now sinful, unbelieving, hostile, but hereafter to be won to penitence, faith, and obedience. He submits to death to complete His revelation of God to the world. He will dwell in His disciples, and they in Him, that the world may believe He is God's Messenger (xvii. 21). The disciples are to be perfected into oneness for the same end, that by

acceptance of His message, the Father's love may be believed (ver. 23). The Cross is the standard under which the Church is to march forth for the conquest of the world. Nothing less and nothing else will meet its need. In its sin and shame, sorrow and suffering, death and despair, the wisest Teacher, and the best Example, and the most loving Companion would not suffice and avail to meet its necessity. The help which comes to it must reach high as the heavens, and deep as hell. It wants God alone as the love which gives fully and freely wisdom, power, holiness, and blessedness for its succour and comfort. It is not God in heaven, however, but God on earth that it craves. The love must share the lot from which it saves; it must go down deeper than human experience goes, so that it may wholly embrace and transform that experience. It is only on the Cross of Christ, where God suffers to save, that the cry out of the world's depth finds not a distant answer from God's heights, but a whisper in these very depths of comfort, help, and hope, which is so dear because it is so near—God in man speaking for God to man His sacrificial and redemptive love.

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